

### Butler suspends air surveillance over Iraq

WASHINGTON (R) — Chief U.N. weapons inspector Richard Butler said on Monday he was suspending flights by U.S. U-2 spy planes over Iraq while the U.N. Security Council debates the future of the operation to control Iraq's arsenal. He also acknowledged that the operation, known as UNSCOM, may be revamped as a result of the crisis with Baghdad but insisted the dismantling operation in Iraq was not finished and rejected suggestions that he should resign. "UNSCOM is not dead," he told a conference on weapons nonproliferation sponsored by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Butler predicted the Security Council would reach a compromise on the inspection group's future operations in Iraq, halted by Baghdad late last year and thrown into further doubt by four days of U.S. and British air strikes in December.

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### Leading Albanian in Kosovo shot dead

PRISTINA (AFP) — Enver Maloku, head of the Kosovo Albanian Information Centre (KIC), a news agency run by ethnic Albanians, was shot dead Monday. The OSCE said, "Maloku was shot dead at 4:10 p.m. [1510 GMT] in front of his house here in Pristina," said Sandy Blyth, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) monitoring mission in Kosovo. The attack was carried out by three assailants, Blyth said. The attack was confirmed by Serb sources.

### Peacekeepers claim gains in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN (R) — West Africa's regional body said its Nigerian-led troops were driving rebels out of Sierra Leone's capital on Monday and had retaken the presidency. The statement came hours after witnesses heard heavy shelling and gunfire coming from the central district of Freetown which the ECOMOG intervention force lost to the rebels on Jan. 6. "The rebels are now being pushed out of Freetown following reinforcement by ECOMOG," the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) said.

### Village in border zone hit by mortar fire

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Anti-Israeli mortar fire Monday rocked the village of Rum in the Jezzine region held by the South Lebanon Army (SLA), the Israeli-backed militia said. Some 30 rounds fell on the Christian village, the SLA said, adding that there had been no casualties in the attack but that 10 houses had been hit. The two-hour bombardment also destroyed seven cars, the militia said. Israel maintains an intelligence presence in the Jezzine region but insists it falls outside the border strip it occupies as a "security zone." No group has yet claimed the attack.

**Japan warns cult is regaining power**

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's Aum Supreme Truth sect, blamed for the 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway, is regrouping and building up strength, a top government official warned Monday. "Aum Shinrikyo is regaining power and is now two thirds of its former size," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshi Nomata told reporters. "We have to watch the cult carefully. In my opinion, it is regrettable the antisubversive activities Law was not applied" to the cult, he said. The group escaped being outlawed in January 1997 because a legal panel ruled there was no reason to believe the cult could still be a threat to society.

### Man charged with tax evasion on donkey income

CAIRO (AP) — A Luxor man is facing prison for failing to pay taxes on income earned from giving rides to tourists on his donkey around Pharaonic sites. The tax department says Ragab Mohammad Mohammed owes it 1,175 pounds (\$354) in unpaid taxes for the last year if the money is not paid Mohammad could be jailed for tax evasion. The Al Wafd newspaper reported Monday. It gave no details of the possible jail term.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation

جورдан تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي.

### White House rejects impeachment charges in official response

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The White House launched its effort to keep President Bill Clinton in office Monday, calling on the Senate to drop impeachment charges against him. Clinton's legal team rejected charges of perjury and obstruction of justice in answer to a formal summons sent by the Senate which is conducting the first impeachment trial in 131 years. Clinton lawyers, arguing that the two impeachment charges should be dismissed by the Senate, said they failed to rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors." (See story on page 4)

## House endorses government's JD2,160m budget for 1999

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Monday endorsed the state's 1999 fiscal budget of JD2,160 million with an estimated deficit of seven per cent and approved recommendations submitted by the House Finance Committee.

Of the 67 deputies who attended the session, 55 voted in favour of the draft budget law, which is to be referred to the Senate for further debate and endorsement.

According to Tarawneh, the government is committed to providing the means for the Armed Forces and security services to carry out the responsibility of ensuring national security.

He said social services will target underprivileged families, continue to provide them with monthly financial aid through the National Aid Fund and help the poor start up small income-generating projects through Employment and Development Fund loans.

The premier said the government is proceeding with the implementation of a national safety net which

entails improving infrastructure services in the less developed regions, including Palestinian refugee camps.

Tarawneh said the government is committed to implementing plans for education as well as a national health service programme, expected to be completed by the year 2010.

Tarawneh said that to encourage investments, the government sold part of its share in the Jordan Cement Factories Company to a French firm, depositing the JD72 million it received from the sale in the Central Bank to be spent on development, not current expenditures.

During 1998, he said, JD480 million in capital was invested in the country, up from JD380 million in 1997. The prime minister pledged continued government efforts to boost investments in production and development fields.

Referring to the deputies' remarks about the agricultural sector, the prime minister said the government allo-

cated JD23 million for 1999 for soft loans to farmers and has already rescheduled the debts of 40,000 farmers, which amount to a total of JD60 million to be paid in three to 10 years. He said 90 per cent of the loans will benefit small farmers.

Discussing tourism pro-

motion, Tarawneh said JD3 million has been allocated to finance a special committee's plans to create the most appropriate atmosphere for tourism.

He said a long-term \$60 million soft loan to Jordan granted by the Japanese government will also be spent on projects to promote the tourism industry.

The prime minister outlined plans by the ministries of education and health to upgrade health and education services.

Referring to corruption, Tarawneh emphasised that the government is determined to pursue a policy of holding to account and punishing persons who abuse their positions or become involved in financial and administrative corruption.

This file photo shows a U.S. F15 soaring through the skies in an undisclosed location in February 1998. U.S. F15s and an F16 fired on two missile sites in Iraq's northern no-fly zone on Monday in two separate incidents, after they were illuminated by Iraqi radar (AFP photo)

## U.S. planes attack two Iraqi sites in northern zone

Kuwait puts army on red alert

### Agencies

### Campbell added.

He said it was not yet clear whether the U.S. had hit the Iraqi targets.

Earlier, Capt. Melinda Morgan, a spokeswoman for the U.S. European Command in Germany, said Baghdad, the Pentagon said.

No damage or casualties were reported on the U.S. side, and the Pentagon said all of the American planes had returned safely to base in Incirlik, Turkey.

U.S. officials said in

Washington that American and British planes would continue to monitor the no-fly zones despite Iraqi opposition to the patrols.

"The coalition will continue to enforce the no-fly zones vigorously. These provocations are a reminder of the threat that President Saddam poses to the region and the need for vigilance in containing that threat," National Security Council spokesman David Leavy said.

In one case, two U.S. F-15 planes responded by dropping two precision-guided bombs on an Iraqi missile launch site. And in the second incident an F-16 jet fired a High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile (HARM) at another site.

"In both cases, coalition aircraft were illuminated by Iraqi air defence missile systems," Campbell said.

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"There was no damage to coalition aircraft, which all returned safely to base and damage to Iraqi forces is currently being assessed."

United States and Britain launched four days of heavy air raids against Iraq last month after Baghdad refused to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors.

President Saddam said after last month's air raids that Baghdad no longer would recognise the no-fly zones, set up after the 1991 Gulf War to protect Kurds in the north and Shiite Muslims in the south from attacks on them by Iraqi forces.

Also Monday, newspapers said Kuwait has put its armed forces on maximum alert and is preparing to call up reservists after emergency talks over Iraq's latest threats against the emirate.

Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah, who chaired a meeting of the Defence Council late Sunday, said in the reports that all army units had been put on maximum combat alert.

He added that preparations were to be made to draft in reserve servicemen "in light of the Iraqi regime's recent threats to the state of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

(Continued on page 2)

## 'Jordan expects additional \$100m in U.S. aid over next two years'

By Caroline Faraj

AMMAN — Jordan is expected to receive \$100 million in additional aid in two equal payments from the U.S. over the next 21 months, a senior Jordanian official said Monday.

The U.S. administration has pledged to seek from Congress an extra \$100 million in economic assistance funds to Jordan, ambassador to Washington Marwan Muasher told the Jordan Times.

Muasher said Jordan's current economic difficulties were a main issue of in-depth discussion during His Majesty King Hussein's last Tuesday meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton at the White House.

"During last Tuesday's

meeting, His Majesty argued for additional economic assistance to the Kingdom, due to the present difficult economic situation and needs," Muasher said.

He said the American administration reacted to the King's argument by pledging to seek an extra \$100 million in economic assistance that will be divided over two years.

"We expect to receive the first extra \$50 million in October 1999, and the rest in October 2000," Muasher said.

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increased investment in Jordan and provide additional aid.

Last year, the U.S. Congress agreed to allocate \$225 million to Jordan in 1999, \$150 million in economic assistance and \$75 million in military aid.

The ambassador pointed out that the U.S. administration also promised to offer all possible assistance to Jordan in order to support its national economy.

"The U.S. promised to support Jordan's demands for increasing trade with the Palestinian areas," Muasher said.

Referring to the recent agreement signed between Jordan and the U.S. on trade and investment, the ambassador said: "We have signed

total of \$341 million, \$200 million in economic and \$141 million in military aid, in 1999.

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# 2 Home & Middle East News

Jordan Times, Tuesday, January 12, 1999

## Netanyahu's political mentor to challenge him for leadership

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Moshe Arens, a former Israeli minister and one-time mentor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, announced on Monday that he will challenge his ex-protégé for the premiership and leadership of the Likud Party.

"I came here to declare my candidacy for the leadership of the Likud and for premiership," Arens said at a press conference in Tel Aviv.

"In the last few weeks I have been following the crisis within the Likud with great fear, watching first-rate people leaving the party knowing that this may adversely affect the election results," said Arens.

"Many people approached me in the streets and told me that only I could save the Likud and unite it," Arens added.

Arens, 73, who served as defence and foreign minister between 1983 and 1992, said that he opposed the 1993-95 Oslo agreements and the October 1998 Wye River land-for-security agreements.

"Oslo is a very bad agreement and we are paying a heavy price for it. I was not enthusiastic about Wye, but we need to implement it if the other side fulfills its obligations," Arens said.

Arens has long been considered among Netanyahu's staunchest backers. His decision marks the latest in a series of rifts within the Likud

party and a new blow for the prime minister's hopes of winning re-election in the May 17 vote.

Arens called for Zeev "Benny" Begin and for Dan Meridor, two former members of Likud who left the party to form their own parties, to come back to their "home" — the Likud Party.

"I also call on my friends Yitzhak Mordechai and Limor Livnat to stay in the party," Arens said in a reference to the defence minister and communications minister, who are expected to announce their political intentions soon.

Arens withdrew from active politics after the Likud government was deposed by the Labour Party under the late Yitzhak Rabin in 1992, but remains a powerful voice in the party.

Internal polls within Likud show Arens would receive only 25 per cent of the vote, however, compared to 60 per cent for Netanyahu, in a central committee leadership election scheduled for Feb. 8.

But his decision to challenge Netanyahu is a severe symbolic blow to the 49-year-old prime minister, who has already seen two other leading Likud figures quit the party to challenge him for the premiership.

While Begin and Meridor belong to Netanyahu's generation, Arens represents the Likud old guard — and his

decision highlights the extent of disenchantment with the prime minister within the party. Arens' candidacy was quickly welcomed by former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, Netanyahu's predecessor as Likud leader and recently a severe critic of the incumbent premier.

Israeli newspapers quoted aides to Netanyahu as saying the prime minister was "furious" with his former mentor.

But on Israel Radio Netanyahu said, "Anyone who wants to [run] is entitled to do so."

"But it is clear to me that I will receive the support of the Likud members as well as that of the public."

Another Likud stalwart, Uzi Landau, a nationalist hardliner who heads the parliamentary defence and foreign affairs committee, is also challenging Netanyahu for the Likud leadership but could step down in favour of Arens. Arens personally brought Netanyahu into politics in the early 1980s — hiring the then U.S. furniture salesman as a diplomatic liaison in the Washington embassy.

He later supported Netanyahu in his bid to take over Likud after the party's 1992 election loss.

But after Netanyahu won election as prime minister in May 1996, Arens grew increasingly critical of his autocratic style.



An Iraqi child looks at a new pair of shoes at Souq Al-Arabi market in Baghdad Monday, January 11, 1999. Iraqis were shopping prior to the feast ending Ramadan. Muslim countries will celebrate, 'Eid Al Fiter, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan this upcoming weekend (AP Photo/Murad Sezer)

## Blair rejects charges of snub to Europe over Iraq

PARIS (R) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair has rejected charges that Britain failed its European Union partners by joining in U.S.-led air strikes against Iraq.

In an article published on Monday in the French daily newspaper Libération, Blair said Britain's participation in last month's attacks would enhance its influence both in Europe and the United States.

French politicians have criticised Britain for going it alone in the latest crisis without consulting its EU partners.

Intervening alongside the Americans my government chose the United States over other friends and allies in Europe and elsewhere, Blair wrote.

Equally, we will be more able to play a prominent role in Europe and elsewhere, if our partners know that we are influential in Washington, he said.

French politicians have criticised Britain for going it alone in the latest crisis without consulting its EU partners.

partners, especially since it had just agreed with France to promote European defence.

Blair said Britain had received offers of military help from several of its EU partners earlier in the crisis.

But for military reasons it

was technically complex to

bring them into an operation

which was easy to mount between two close allies who had both deployed forces in the region.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### More Arab countries to attend summit

CAIRO (R) — Fourteen Arab League members have so far said they will attend an Arab foreign ministers' meeting on Iraq, sources at the Arab League in Cairo said on Monday. Mauritania, Somalia, Djibouti and the Palestinians are the latest Arab League members to confirm their attendance at the meeting, called after last month's U.S.-British air strikes on Iraq and already postponed once because of Arab differences. Ten countries had said earlier they would join the talks scheduled to take place in Cairo on Jan. 24 — Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Lebanon, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and Qatar. The foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates met late on Sunday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia and newspapers said they were united in their stand on Iraq ahead of the foreign ministers' meeting.

### Journalist's prison sentence cancelled

KUWAIT (AP) — An appeals court on Monday cancelled a jail sentence given a Kuwaiti journalist for publishing a joke deemed to insult Islam. It instead imposed a fine of 50 dinars (\$165). In June, the Court of First Instance sentenced Mohammad Al Saqr, editor of the independent daily Al Qabas, to six months in prison for printing the joke. In the joke, a teacher asks his students: "Why did God kick Adam and Eve out of heaven?" A student answers: "Because they hadn't paid the rent."

### Iranian official to visit Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — A senior Iranian official was due to visit Iraq on Monday to discuss improving relations between the two neighbours as well as the latest developments in the region, the official news agency IRNA reported.

Mohammad Sadre, deputy foreign minister on Arab and African affairs, will meet with Iraqi officials "as part of Iran's initiative to peacefully settle existing problems in the region," IRNA said.

Iran and Iraq are still recovering from their 1980-1988 war with several issues, mainly the fate of prisoners of war, still unresolved.

### Khaddam receives Hawatmeh

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria and a Palestinian opposition faction condemned Monday the "reckless policies of Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu]" and stressed the need for Arab solidarity. Syrian Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam and head of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Nayef Hawatmeh also stressed the need for Palestinian unity, a statement from the group said. The two sides further stressed the importance of working to get the sanctions against Iraq lifted. Syrian Information Minister Mohammad Salman took part in the meeting, as did Ramzi Rabah and Fahd Suliman of the DFLP politburo.

### Vedrine to meet Sharon this week

PARIS (AFP) — French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine on Thursday met his controversial Israeli counterpart Ariel Sharon, paying his first official visit to France since being given the portfolio last October. The Israeli embassy Monday said that Sharon, who is on a working visit to France, "will hold talks and dinner with Vedrine on Thursday. Sharon, however, has no other meetings scheduled with French officials. He is due to fly in Wednesday evening to outline Israeli foreign policy as a guest speaker at a forum and meet French Jewish leaders, and to return home Saturday.

### Truce panel holds first meeting

NAQOURA (AFP) — The international committee monitoring the ceasefire in south Lebanon met Monday to discuss eight Lebanese and five Israeli complaints of truce violations. The Lebanese delegation said the panel, in its first meeting this year, convened at the United Nations headquarters at the coastal town of Naqoura on the Israeli-Lebanese border, they said. Lebanon is accusing Israel of eight violations of the April 1996 ceasefire agreement not to attack civilians or launch assaults from civilian areas.

### Israeli surfers assault Hezbollah site

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israeli Internet surfers have been bombarding the website of the Shiite Muslim Hezbollah, the main guerrilla group fighting the Jewish state's occupation of south Lebanon, a Beirut daily said Monday. "Death to Hezbollah. We will kill you all," read an extract of an e-mail sent by an Israeli surfer on Dec. 8, a day after a Hezbollah attack, the As-Safir newspaper reported. The number of e-mails and their tone, mostly threatening, varies according to the military situation in southern Lebanon, the paper said. "Please stop using explosive charges."

## 'Israel violating Palestinian rights'

CAIRO (AFP) — The U.N. rapporteur on human rights Hanu Halinen on Monday said he expected Israel to step up human rights abuses against Palestinians over the next few months.

Halinen was speaking to reporters after talks here with Arab League Secretary General Esmael Abdul Meguid on the situation in the Palestinian territories which he recently toured to prepare his annual report. "Israel is not taking any steps to improve human rights for Palestinians. I have seen for myself Israeli human rights violations," the Finnish diplomat told reporters.

He said he expected human rights violations to increase as Israel and the Palestinian National Authority move closer to the May 4 end of the five-year interim period of self-rule outlined in the Oslo peace accords. "There will be more pressure on the Palestinians," Halinen said.

## U.N. envoy resumes Cyprus shuttle diplomacy

NICOSIA (R) — U.N. Cyprus envoy Ann Hercus on Monday resumed her shuttle diplomacy aimed at resolving the division of the island, boosted by Nicosia's recent decision to cancel a controversial plan to install Russian missiles.

The former New Zealand government minister said only that "the shuttle talks have recommenced" after a 40-minute meeting with

President Glafcos Clerides, the Greek Cypriot leader. She also plans to meet Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash later in the week.

For the past three months Hercus has been crisscrossing the U.N.-controlled "green line" dividing the island, trying to come up with ways to lessen tensions between estranged Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Turkey, which invaded northern Cyprus in 1974

after a Greek-inspired coup and has some 30,000 troops on the island, vowed to prevent the missiles from arriving.

Western countries feared the missile deployment could worsen relations between Greece and Turkey, partners in NATO but long-time adversaries over Cyprus.

Nicosia's climbdown came just days after the United Nations urged the

two communities in Cyprus to commit themselves to a process of reducing tension and limiting troop levels and armaments on the island.

The United States is determined to work very hard to seize the opportunities created by the President's decision," said U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Brill, who had a separate meeting with Clerides on Monday.

## U.S. planes attack Iraqi sites in northern zone

(Continued from page 1)

Kuwait has 15,300 active forces and reserves of nearly 24,000, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. It also has defence pacts with several Western states, notably Washington.

Sheikh Saleh stressed the importance of taking other measures to boost the defensive capability of Kuwait as dictated by military developments.

Iraq on Sunday described Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, who both allow their territory to be

used as bases for U.S. and British aircraft patrolling the southern "no-fly" zone in Iraq, as "thieves and outlaws."

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz said Sunday that Baghdad refuses to apologise for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and called for the scrapping of a U.N. resolution which demarcated the border in favour of Kuwait.

Kuwait Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah told Al Rai Al Aam that this demand was "yet another testimony to the fact that

After a call from Iraqi President Saddam Hus-

sein for Arab masses to revolt against their leaders, an Iraqi opposition chief warned last week that Iraq was now preparing to sponsor sabotage attacks in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Sheikh Sabah charged.

Kuwait moved some army units to the Iraqi border as a precautionary measure in December, but they were redeployed following the end of the intense four-night U.S.-British bombing campaign against Iraq.

After a call from Iraqi President Saddam Hus-

sein, on a visit to Japan, said any move by Iraq to withdraw recognition of Kuwait would be a flagrant violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions, adding: "We are watching it very closely." He refused to say in response to questions whether Washington and London might be preparing for further raids after the month-long Muslim observance of Ramadan ends next week.

I wouldn't want to speculate on what we might do in the future, he told reporters on Monday.

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Children's French programme  
15:30 ...Carton-Banana in Pyjamas  
16:00 ...Doc - Life Choices  
16:30 ...Ch. 2 links with Ch. 1,  
17:10 Doc - Mothers of the Wild  
18:15 ...Omar Ben Abdul Aziz  
19:00 ...Le Journal  
19:15 ...Words of Wisdom  
19:30 ...News headlines  
19:35 ...Comedy - Step by Step  
20:00 Journey Across the World of Islam  
20:30 ...Drama - Tom Jones  
21:10 Doc. - You and Your Car,  
21:30 ...UN Cup  
22:00 ...News in English  
22:30 ...Lonesome Dove  
23:10 ...Feature film - "The American Clock"  
00:30 ...End of TX

## PRAYER TIMES

04:56 ...Fajr  
05:11 ...(Sunrise) Duhr  
11:44 ...Dhuhr  
14:32 ...Asr  
16:55 ...Maghreb  
18:17 ...Isha

## CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Swieifieh Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
463785

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Dr. Tawfiq Qubain ..... 4623029  
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaidi ..... 4130111

AMMAN:

Firas Pharmacy ..... 5661912  
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy ..... 5537004

Ruko Al Dawha Pharmacy ..... 5536169

IBRID:

Dr. Lutfi Shibli ..... 021241789  
Fou'ad Pharmacy ..... 021275360

ZARQA:

Dr. Akram Haddad ..... 09983550  
Palestine Pharmacy ..... 09983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 46371111

Civil Defence Department ..... 56611111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue ..... 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199

Rescue Police ..... 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade ..... 4617101

Blood Bank ..... 4775121

Highway Police ..... 5343402

Traffic Police ..... 4896390

Public Security Dept. ..... 4630321

Hotel Complaints ..... 5605800

Price Complaints ..... 5661176

Water & Sewage Complaints ..... 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints ..... 4787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) ..... 121

# Home News

Jordan Times, Tuesday, January 12, 1999 3

## Queen Noor says 'honour crime' is inconsistent with Islam, Constitution

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor appeared on international television last night to discuss honour crimes in Jordan, and suggested that amendments to the Penal Code were imminent.

Queen Noor, speaking during an interview with the American news network CNN, said that "this type of violence against women is not consistent with Islam or with [the Jordanian] Constitution... this [legal] area is being reviewed and amendments are being proposed to make these laws more consistent with Islamic law and the Constitution."

Queen Noor appeared on the programme along with members of the Police Department's Family Protection Unit, Jordan Times crime reporter Rana Hussein, Head of the National Institute of Forensic Medicine Mo'men Hadidi and women who currently reside in the Juweideh prison for their own protection. The programme also included interviews with men who have committed honour killings.

Annually 25-30 women are killed to "defend family honour." A press release said Her Majesty several weeks ago agreed to participate in the programme to contribute as "balanced a

perspective as possible" on the practice which has drawn fire from human rights organisations worldwide.

She added that she has "very strong personal feelings as a Muslim, as a woman, as a wife and as a mother about this form of violence and every form of violence against women."

The Queen praised the efforts of the police department who recently founded a Family Protection Unit adding that the department will soon be a "partner with UNDP and UNIFEM and our Ministry of Social Development in establishing a women's shelter that is geared to counsel, to rehabilitate and to protect women and their children who may be potential victims of these crimes. That is because they are very concerned that these crimes be prevented — that these women be given a chance for protection until the pressures are relieved on their family," she said.

Queen Noor noted that His Majesty King Hussein, in his 1997 opening address to Parliament, condemned violence against women saying that it was clearly inconsistent with Islamic law and the spirit of the Jordanian Constitution, neither of which distinguish between men and

equality before the law for men and women in the country. She added that the King "as a Muslim has made that commitment and as a head of state and head of the larger Jordanian family."

The two articles in the Jordanian Penal Code, which apply to crimes of honour, and now under consideration for revision, are the exonerating law, a section of Article 340 in the Jordanian Penal Code (No. 16, 1960) stating that "he who discovers his wife or one of his female relatives committing adultery and kills, wounds, or injures one of them, is exempted from any penalty," and Article 98 that states, "He who commits a crime in a fit of fury caused by an unrightful and dangerous act on the part of the victim benefits from a reduction of penalty."

Only men can benefit from the reduction of penalty or total exemption; women in the same situation are not entitled to claim exemption from penalty under these laws. During the interview, Queen Noor reiterated that there is no "gender discrimination" in Jordan's Constitution or in Islamic Sharia, neither of which distinguish between men and

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## Obasanjo's party wins Nigerian state elections

LAGOS (AFP) — The centre-left Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) of presidential hopeful Olusegun Obasanjo confirmed its position as Nigeria's leading political party in State elections, final results showed Monday.

The PDP, which won sweeping victories in local elections held last December, took 20 state governorships Saturday against nine for the centre-right All Peoples Party (APP) and six for the radical Alliance for Democracy (AD).

The results showed some small inroads being made by the APP into the PDP's strongholds in the north, however, while the AD held on to its heartland of the Yoruba southwest.

Voting took place in 35 of Nigeria's 36 states but was deferred in Bayelsa state in the south because of recent clashes between security agents and locals demanding a greater share of oil wealth.

A remarkable AD success was in the economic capital, Lagos, where former senator and recently returned political exile Bola Tinubu won the governorship in a remarkable turnaround in political fortunes.

Among other notable winners were Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, brother of Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, the late number two to former military ruler and now presidential candidate Obasanjo.

Yar'Adua won in Katsina for the PDP.

The elections, which were marked by smooth organisation and largely peaceful voting across the country, were the second in a series planned to lead Africa's country back to civilian rule this year.

Nigeria's military ruler General Abdulsalami Abubakar has promised to hand over to an elected president on May 29.

After the local and now

state elections, legislative elections are due on Feb. 20 and presidential polls on Feb. 27.

The favoured candidate in the presidential polls is Obasanjo, the general who in 1979 turned over power to an elected civilian president after he had been military ruler for about three years. He is seeking the nomination of the PDP.

Observers in Lagos Monday said the PDP's strong showing Saturday made its candidate the most likely to win the presidency in February and would heat up the contest for the PDP nomination.

The party, and its rivals, the APP and AD, all have to hold congresses to choose their candidates and the dates for the gatherings are expected to emerge in coming days.

The international community has meanwhile applauded the so-far smooth transition to civilian rule in Nigeria.

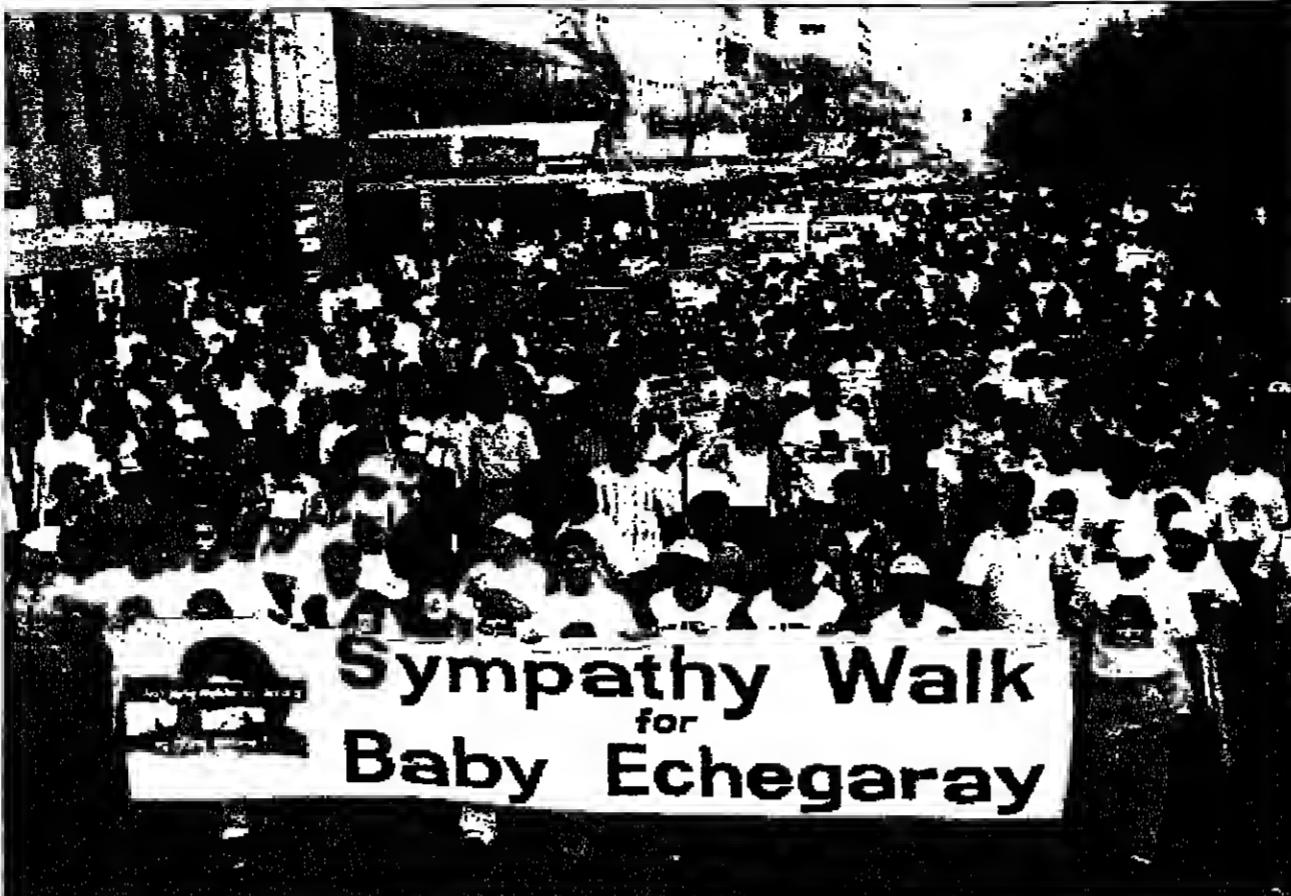
Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku Monday said Saturday's elections were "another important step."

"Nigeria is well on course in the programme of transition to democracy and civilian rule," he said.

Anyaoku said Botswana former president Ketumile Masire would lead a high-level Commonwealth mission to Nigeria next month to monitor the legislative and presidential elections.

Since independence in 1960, the military, headed since June by Abubakar, have dominated Africa's most populous country, home to 108 million people.

The elections are seen by many as the last chance for a return to civilian rule in a united Nigeria. If these polls were to fail many Nigerians might give up on the troubled country as a nation state, many observers believe.



Thousands of pro-death penalty supporters march at the financial district in Makati to show support for the 15-year-old rape victim identified as 'Baby' Echegaray. The demonstrators demanded execution for Leo Echegaray who was convicted of raping her in 1994 when she was 11. Echegaray was given a reprieve by the Philippine Supreme Court hours before he was scheduled to be executed on Jan. 4 (Reuters photo)

## Manila rape victim in march for attacker's death

MANILA (R) — A Filipina schoolgirl raped by her step-father marched with hundreds of supporters through Manila's financial centre Monday to campaign for his execution, and the supreme court said it would rule on the man's fate next week.

Employees from high-rise buildings in the Makati business district threw confetti as the girl, her face veiled to hide her identity, and her supporters marched in the afternoon heat to demand death for the child rapist whose execution was blocked.

Identified only as "Baby", the girl was 10 years old when she was raped several times by her step-father, house painter Leo Echegaray, in 1994. First Lady Loti Estrada and Vice-President Gloria Macapagal joined the

march linking arms with the rape victim as her supporters moved through Makati bearing "Death for Echegaray" signs.

Echegaray, 38, was to have been put to death by lethal injection last week in what should have been the country's first execution in decades but the supreme court ordered a stay of execution.

The 15-member court, meeting behind closed doors Monday, considered a government plea to allow the execution and said it would meet again on Jan. 19 to deliver a ruling.

It ordered Echegaray's lawyers to submit their response to the government petition by January 14. court officials said.

Echegaray's reprieve raised a storm of protest across the country, where previous surveys had

shown many Filipinos favoured the death penalty to curb a resurgence of crime.

Pro-death penalty activists have held rallies in major cities and President Estrada has sharply criticised the supreme court.

Last Monday, the court issued a temporary restraining order three hours before Echegaray was to be put to death, saying the execution had to be stayed pending the outcome of fresh attempts in congress to overturn the law authorising capital punishment.

A government petition contended that the supreme court ruling had invaded a function of the executive and ignored the rights of the victim.

It also said the stay could create a dangerous precedent since any law could at some time be repealed or

altered.

Congressman Roilo Golez boosted the government case by submitting to the court Monday a resolution signed by 122 of the House of Representatives' 220 members saying the House had no intention of reconsidering the death penalty.

"This is an overwhelming majority," Golez told reporters.

"There is no way the law will be repealed by this congress. The house is sending this message because the supreme court is looking for signals."

The Philippines abolished the death penalty in 1987 but restored it in 1994 because of a spurt in violent crime. No one has been executed since 1976 although there are more than 850 people on death row.

## Prosecution case against Malaysia's Anwar nears close

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The prosecution case in the trial of ousted deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim is nearing a close here with both sides gearing up to argue whether the controversial hearing should proceed or be dismissed.

As the trial entered its 11th week Monday, Anwar's lawyers were wrapping up their cross-examination of the final prosecution witness, chemist Lim Kong Boon. He is due to step down from the witness box this week after which both sides are to summarise their evidence on the case.

If presiding judge Justice Augustine Paul rules there is a case against Anwar, the defence will then start presenting its own witnesses.

Legal sources said the

defence would strive to "punch holes into the prosecution case" based on contradictory testimony by key witnesses and to prove there was a conspiracy against Anwar.

Anwar, 51, is on trial on four charges of corruption related to allegations he used his position to cover up claims of sexual misconduct, carrying a penalty of up to 14 years to jail.

He was sacked on Sept. 2 after falling out of favour with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and arrested 18 days later after leading massive protests against his former mentor.

He also faces a fifth corruption charge and five charges of sodomy, with a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment plus whipping, all of

which he has dismissed as part of a conspiracy by his political enemies.

Anwar's case drew world condemnation when he appeared in court with a black eye and neck brace, alleging police assaulted him under custody.

His cause was further boosted when official findings held police responsible for his beatings, leading Malaysia's police chief Rahim Noor to resign Friday.

Anwar also held Mahathir, in his capacity as home minister, responsible for his beating and sought damages from the leader.

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which put loyalists in key posts and dodged potential challenge by deferring party elections.

Public interest in Anwar's corruption trial, which started on Nov. 2, appeared to wane after the case proceeded at a glacial pace.

But in an unexpected turn of events, Zainur Zakaria — one of Anwar's nine lawyers — was sentenced to three months in jail on November 30 for contempt of court for refusing to apologise for seeking to remove two prosecutors from the trial, alleging they tried to falsely implicate Anwar in various sex offences.

The scandal was further fuelled when Anwar's former driver Azizan Abu Bakar, and Umni Hafida Ali, the sister of Anwar's then private secretary

were called to the stand.

The prosecution cases rest largely on a letter to Mahathir in 1997 in which Umni alleged that Anwar was a homosexual and that her brother's wife had an affair with Anwar.

Azizan stunned the court when he gave lurid details of his alleged relationship with Anwar, saying he was sodomised by both Anwar and the politician's adopted brother in 1992.

The trial also heard that Umni had been disowned by her father over the scandal, unveiling a dramatic family feud in court, but she has denied being "madly in love" with Anwar.

The defence later revealed it had copies of a secret record-

ing of an alleged conversation between Umni and a lawmaker last June, which exposed a conspiracy to topple Anwar but the judge ruled out the evidence.

In another bizarre twist, pros-

ecutors hauled a semen-stained mattress into the courtroom, seized by police as part of their probe into allegations that Anwar had sex with the wife of an aide and fathered her child. Police witnesses said blood tests cleared Anwar of the charge.

A chemist however, testified he found semen stains of Anwar and body fluid of the wife of the former leader's aide on the mattress but later acknowledged that the stains could have been planted.

## Impeachment trial gets started with concerns about length, witnesses

WASHINGTON (AP) — As the Senate moves ahead this week with President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, some Republicans are demanding to hear from witnesses while Democrats warn that testimony could spin the proceedings out of control.

The White House had until noon EST (1700 GMT) Monday to respond to the Senate summons and declare it will present a defense for two articles of impeachment against the president.

Both the House prosecutors and White House lawyers had until the end of the day to present motions. The White House likely wants to seek a motion to dismiss the case.

A vote on that would not come until after the prosecutors and the White House present their cases to the jury of 100 senators and take questions from the senators. That

phase begins Thursday with House arguments and could last several weeks.

The decision to call witnesses also will follow the initial presentations. Republicans and Democrats are divided on the need or wisdom of that step.

"It seems to me it is hard to have a trial without witnesses."

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, a Utah Republican, said Sunday on ABC television's "This Week".

He said this was "probably the most important trial of this century, and it calls for that type of consideration." But Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat, warned that "you could get into a quagmire, which would be very lurid, which would not be a dignified ending to this sad chapter and would not add enough evidentiary value to outweigh

the negatives."

The 13 House "managers", or prosecutors, say they must have witnesses to properly present their case alleging that Clinton committed perjury and obstruction of justice in trying to cover up his affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Rep. Asa Hutchinson, an Arkansas Republican, said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that they could limit the witnesses to about six. Among them, he named Ms. Lewinsky; the president's secretary, Betty Currie; and Clinton friend Vernon Jordan, who helped Ms. Lewinsky get a job.

"We do not want to get into graphic details. We want to talk about the obstruction of justice," Hutchinson said.

White House spokesman Jim Kennedy said the hope is that after the initial phase of the trial, senators will realise

the case does not warrant removing the president from office and vote to dismiss the charges.

Kennedy said Clinton plans to deliver his State of the Union policy address to Congress as scheduled Jan. 19, even though the trial will be under way. "We have no intention of being diverted from that," he said.

Sen. Christopher Dodd, a Connecticut Democrat, said on CNN's "Late Edition" that if Republicans, in a partisan vote, force the acceptance of witnesses, the bipartisan spirit that brought senators together on a format for the trial "could degenerate very quickly."

"We know the facts," Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle said on CBS. "I think we are ready now to present the evidence and make a decision." Most

Democrats say they prefer that Clinton stay in office but that Congress approve a strong resolution censuring him for his actions in the Lewinsky matter.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, told NBC she is working on a censure motion, saying that if Clinton is not removed from office, "there should be something before the body."

Democrats have 45 seats in the Senate, more than enough to defeat a vote to remove Clinton from office, which requires a two-thirds majority. A motion to dismiss would need 51 votes.

From Thursday, the House of Representatives will have 24 hours, probably over three days, to present its case as to why Clinton should be convicted.

Rep. Bill McCollum, a Florida Republican, said Rep.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### EU to have early warning system for illegal immigration

COLOMBO (AP) — The European Union will monitor conflict zones such as Sri Lanka in order to provide early warnings to its members about possible illegal immigration as people flee violence, German ambassador said Monday. "The idea comes from constant threats from conflict areas in Europe and our neighbourhood, but gradually the concern will be introduced in all the conflict zones of the world, including Sri Lanka," Helmut van Edig told reporters. His country is the current president of the Union. Under the proposed system, EU officials will monitor the situation in conflict areas and will assess whether there is likely to be an exodus of refugees. Member nations would be alerted before the migration actually starts. Edig said asylum would still be available to those deemed legal refugees, but "we will also be careful in not making us vulnerable in a situation of influx." He did not specify what countries might take to keep out immigrants. EU rules regarding repatriation of illegal immigrants would be defined soon, but did not elaborate. In Sri Lanka, where a 16-year-old Tamil war罪犯, a Tamil Tiger separatist against the government, large number of minority Tamils have immigrated to various countries in Europe, Australia, India and the United States. No reliable figure is available on Tamil migration, but police around the world often detect Tamils would-be-migrants with incomplete documents. Tamils make up 3.3 million out of Sri Lanka's population of 18.5 million people. Militants among Sri Lanka's Tamils say they can only prosper away from domination by the Sinhalese majority. The Sri Lankan government says Tamils have equal rights and opportunities.

### Eleven Indonesian soldiers arrested after civilians beaten to death

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Military police Monday arrested 11 soldiers accused of beating and torturing four civilians to death while in custody, a senior army officer said. Troops raided village in Indonesia's westernmost province of Aceh Saturday and arrested dozens of residents suspected of supporting Islamic separatists. The civilians were later locked up in building in the town of Lombok, where they were attacked by troops, human rights activists said. In addition to the four dead, 23 civilians were seriously injured. Lombok military commander Col. Johnny Wahab said 11 soldiers had been arrested and more might be questioned. "We have to uphold the law," said Wahab. Aceh, 1,750 kilometres northwest of Jakarta, is one of three Indonesian provinces where small groups of rebels are fighting for independence. The Acehnese rebels have been fighting for decades for an Islamic state in the strongly Muslim region. Indonesia's military has long been accused of committing widespread human rights abuses. Its commanders have promised to improve its record following the resignation last May of autocratic President Suharto who used the military to suppress dissent during his 32-year rule. Suharto resigned after protests and riots erupted during the worst economic crisis in decades.

### China's Great Wall built 300 years earlier than believed

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese experts said Monday the Great Wall was built 2,500 years ago, 300 years before China's first emperor Qin Shihuang was believed to have initiated its construction to keep out marauding barbarians. "The earliest part of the Great Wall has been found in the Shandong Province, which roughly parallels the ancient Qi Kingdom," the official Xinhua news agency quoted Zhang Guangming, deputy chief of the cultural relics bureau of Zibo city in Shandong, as saying. The Qi Great Wall started at a small village in Changqiang county and ran to the sea near Qingdao for a total length of 620 kilometres. Zhang said. He said historical records showed the now-dilapidated wall had 12 passes, nine gates, 50 castles and barracks and 12 beacon towers. "The winding wall comprised the southern fortifications of this strong kingdom," Zhang said. The Kingdom of Qi at that time contended with others for hegemony and its king Huangong was one of the five most powerful dukes during the spring and autumn period (770 BC-476 BC). "It was extremely difficult for the ancient people to build such giant military defences," Zhang said, adding that labourers spent 170 years to build the wall. Archaeologists recently unearthed cultural ruins and reliefs near the Shandong section of the Great Wall. The new finds are expected to aid in the study on Qi Culture. More than 20 emperors ordered the building or renovation of the wall, which eventually gained a length of more than 5,000 kilometres.

### British Marquess, aristocrat and junkie, dead at 44

LONDON (AP) — The Marquess of Bristol, born into one of Britain's richest families but whose drug addiction cost him a fortune and his freedom, has died aged 44, his agent said. He was found Sunday after apparently dying in his sleep at his home in Suffolk, eastern England. He had been suffering from a flu-type bug. "He was perfectly well over Christmas and was discussing going to the Bahamas for a couple of weeks," his agent Simon Pott said. The marquess was jailed twice for possession of drugs. A trial in 1993 was told that his addiction had cost his family around £7 million (\$11.7 million, 10 million euros) in 10 years. His half-brother and heir, Lord Frederick Hervey, 19, who is studying at Edinburgh University, becomes the 8th Marquess of Bristol. The former marquess, who once estimated his personal wealth at £30 million, led a colourful life. As well as the 4,000-acre Ickworth estate, he also inherited £4 million, a 57,000-acre Australian sheep station and four Louisiana oil wells. But he gave up his lease on Ickworth House last year, claiming it was too expensive to maintain and earlier sold many of his belongings. He was arrested in 1988 and later served nine months in prison after £1,000 worth of cocaine was found aboard his private helicopter. In December 1993, he was jailed for 10 months for possession of heroin and cocaine. Police found drugs hidden among the Old Masters and Chippendale furniture



A Yugoslav army convoy heads to positions near Tabo village in Podujevo area, 30 km north of Pristina, the regional capital of Kosovo. Violence escalated in Kosovo as the Yugoslav army pounded ethnic Albanian strongholds after the guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army captured eight Yugoslav Army soldiers (Reuters photo)

## Kosovo rebels under pressure to free army hostages

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP)

— International monitors kept up contacts with Kosovo rebels Monday in a bid to free eight Yugoslav Army soldiers.

"Talks are still ongoing," said Heinz Nitsch, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)'s Kosovo Verification Mission (KVM).

The separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) said in a statement Sunday they would release the soldiers to return for the liberation of ethnic Albanians held prisoners by the Serbian authorities.

The soldiers "will be released

when an agreement has been concluded with American and European mediators on the exchange of prisoners of war, in line with international conventions," the statement said.

The eight soldiers were seized Friday near Stari Trg, 12 kilometers north of Kosovska Mitrovica.

KVM observers — put in place to monitor a U.S.-brokered ceasefire that began in mid-October — visited the men Saturday and Sunday and reported they were in good health.

Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure for the soldiers' release has

been mounting. In Brussels, NATO Secretary-general Javier Solana Sunday demanded "the immediate release" of the soldiers and called on both sides in Kosovo to initiate "political process" to resolve the Kosovo crisis.

OSCE chairman Knut Vollebekk, who arrived in Belgrade on Sunday, was due to hold talks with Yugoslav political leaders on Monday.

Vollebekk is on a five-day Balkan mission focusing on the Kosovo crisis.

More than 1,000 people, mostly ethnic Albanians, have

been killed since February when fighting erupted in the Yugoslav province between the KLA and Serbian security forces.

That violence subsided into a fragile truce in October under a U.S.-brokered accord, but the ceasefire has been repeatedly tested by attacks on civilians and Serbian police.

The KLA is the main guerrilla force fighting for the independence of Kosovo, whose population is 90 per cent ethnic Albanian. The province is also regarded by Serbs as the cradle of their Orthodox religion and culture.

## Pilot of crashed Thai jet could not see runway

BANGKOK (AP) — The pilot of a Thai Airways jet which crashed last month killing 101 people was blinded by a storm during two aborted landing attempts, according to a leaked transcript Monday.

The transcript of the black box voice recorder, appeared to indicate that on his first two landing attempts the pilot could not see the runway. The Nation daily reported.

After two aborted approaches, the pilot was asked by an air traffic controller: "Please confirm whether to join final approach to land again."

They also said the captain told them on the plane's intercom that he was blinded by rain on his first two landing attempts.

A source close to the investigation refused to comment on the report however, and said it was too early to speculate on the cause of the crash.

The pilot replied: "Yes I want to make another try."

Moments later, the plane plunged into a swamp close to the airport at Surat Thani, southern Thailand. The pilot was among those who died.

Some of the 45 people who survived the crash have criticised the pilot for not returning to Bangkok after the first two unsuccessful attempts.

They also said the captain told them on the plane's intercom that he was blinded by rain on his first two landing attempts.

A source close to the investigation refused to comment on the report however, and said it was too early to speculate on the cause of the crash.

"I cannot say right now what was the cause of the inci-

dent, we cannot come to a conclusion yet as there are a lot of other factors in the incident," he told AFP.

Data from the black boxes arrived back in Thailand with investigators from the United States Monday, he said, adding a meeting on the crash was to be scheduled soon.

"We are trying to conclude things as soon as we can," he added.

Investigation sources had previously said conversations between the control tower and the pilot on the black box voice recorder were "barely audible."

The investigation is trying to find out if the disaster was caused by pilot error, inaccurate

## Bounty's cannon raised from the deep

BRISBANE, Australia (AP)

— One of the cannons from the Bounty, the ship made famous in the mutiny against Captain Bligh, has been raised from the sea near Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific, researchers said Monday.

A maritime archaeology expedition from Townsville's James Cook University and residents of Pitcairn Island retrieved the weapon by building an intricate air-powered lifting device.

They used the machine to extract the 800 kilogramme cannon from 200

years of marine growth in Pitcairn's Bounty Bay and bring it carefully ashore, expedition leader Nigel Erskine said.

Pitcairn is the island where Fletcher Christian and a group of Bounty mutineers and Tahitians fled in 1789 to avoid being recaptured by the British.

One of the mutineers, terrified that the British would find them on Pitcairn, set fire to the Bounty, scuttling the vessel off the coast.

The mutineers remained on Pitcairn undetected until 1808.

The British Admiralty sent

the HMS Pandora to capture the Bounty mutineers and bring them back to England for trial.

The crew of the Pandora successfully recaptured mutineers who had remained in Tahiti after the mutiny, but did not find Christian and the other men hiding on Pitcairn.

After months of fruitless searching in the South Pacific, the Pandora turned for home, only to be wrecked off the northeastern end of Australia's Great Barrier Reef in 1791.

Artifacts retrieved over the past few years from the Pandora will housed in the

new Museum of Tropical Queensland.

The James Cook University expedition has also retrieved other items from the Bounty, including rigging, hull timbers, cannon balls and grapeshot and lead drums used for the watering system for breadfruit in Tahiti.

Erskine and the expedition went to Pitcairn last September and was due to return at the end of next month.

They have also excavated the original house sites of John Adams, Christian and his son Thursday October.

ing a robbery outside a Houston supermarket.

Dianne Clements, president of the Houston-based victims' rights group Justice For All, noted that Graham's conviction already has been the subject of 35 judicial reviews.

"There's no reason to believe that this 36th review will not yield the same results: not credible, guilty as charged," Mrs. Clements said Sunday.

Graham, 35, was convicted in the May 1981 shooting death of Bobby Lambert during

what it should have done, which is to give themselves more time to look at this issue," Officials with the Texas attorney general's office, which could appeal the ruling, did not return a message from The Associated Press Sunday.

In fighting his execution, Graham has attracted support from the likes of actor Danny Glover, entertainer Harry Belafonte, filmmaker Spike Lee and Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

"I intend to fight like hell," he said last week while urging supporters to show up at the Huntsville, Texas, prison

to protest his execution.

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## French conservatives cry betrayal after making deal with left

PARIS (AP) — Leaders of French conservative parties were accusing each other of betrayal Monday after a centre-right politician made a deal with Socialists over the weekend to win an important regional post.

Anne-Marie Comparini, a member of the centre-right Union for French Democracy, or UDF, was elected head of the regional council in the southeastern Rhone-Alpes area Saturday, but only after accepting leftist support from Socialist members.

The election followed two days of manoeuvring and has plunged the right, already splintered, into further disarray.

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Francois Bayrou was quoted as saying Monday in a daily Libération.

The conservative coalition

was initially shattered in June 1997 after President Jacques Chirac called early legislative elections in a bid to strengthen his position, only to see his centre-right majority swept away by a Socialist-led coalition.

But Francois Bayrou, UDF president, defended Comparini against charges of betrayal, saying the weekend vote showed that the left and the right could work together to fight extremism.

"If the RPR thinks they can whistle and have everyone follow them, they are wrong," UDF president

votes from the National Front, pushing rightist leaders to purge the rebellious members and form a new organisation called the Alliance.

Conservatives said

Monday that the new bickering on the right could harm conservatives' chances in the upcoming European parliamentary elections.

And the right was further

split last year when

Former Defense Minister Charles Millon, then the head of the Rhone-Alpes regional council, accepted support from the far-right National Front in his bid for re-election.

Several other mainstream

conservatives accepted

votes from the National Front, pushing rightist leaders to purge the rebellious members and form a new organisation called the Alliance.

Conservatives said

Monday that the new bickering on the right could harm conservatives' chances in the upcoming European parliamentary elections.

"What is happening in Rhone-Alpes doesn't bode well for the formation of a common list for the European elections," Philippe Vasseur, vice president of the free market-oriented Liberal Democracy party said in a television interview.

## Italian police arrest suspected mafia killers

VITTORIA, Sicily (R) —

Italian police said Monday they had arrested 20 suspected members of a Mafia clan believed to be behind the worst gangland killing in eight years.

Roberto Ripollino, a colonel in the carabinieri paramilitary police, told reporters those arrested included three suspected of ordering the murders in the southern Sicilian town of Ragusa on Jan. 2, and a hitman who allegedly carried them out.

Five men were shot dead in the attack as they drank coffee in a bar. Police said at the time they believed the killing was part of a feud between rival clans over control of lucrative drug rackets.

The dead included two bystanders who were shot merely because they had witnessed the crime. One of the detainees was the brother of a Mafia boss killed in the attack police said.

Last November, police said they had come closer than ever before to seizing Bernardo Provenzano, the elusive boss

of the Mafia, who has not been seen in public for three decades and who is believed to have stepped into Rina's shoes.

## Snowfall causes havoc in France

LYON, France (AP) — Heavy

snowfalls and icy winds caused road and rail havoc in eastern and southern France, with tens of thousands of homes left without electricity.

As many as 25,000 homes were without electricity in villages in the southern Drome and Ardèche areas also due to damage by snow to power lines.

In the Rhône-Alpes region around Lyon, police reported traffic jams several kilometres long on the A7 motorway south of Montélimar, while trains between Lyon and Paris were delayed between one and three hours after snow damaged electric power lines.

The sudden cold came only five days after freak weather had brought temperatures in some areas to an all-time high for the time of year.

The temperature in Paris last week reached a record of 16 degrees Celsius, more than twice the normal average for the season.

Northbound lanes on the A7

motorway were cut off to traffic south of Montélimar late morning due to heavy snow that trapped several lorries. The road had been cut off several times in the night as

winds brought down power-lines.

Rescue workers meanwhile were called in throughout the area to clear other roads of fallen trees and power and phone lines.

As many as 25,000 homes were without electricity in villages in the southern Drome and Ardèche areas also due to damage by snow to power lines.

Traffic was also slowed in the departments of the Loire, Ain and Ardèche.

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## What planet are you on?

By John Walsh

YE GODS, what a year. "Sorting out a more satisfactory emotional base" for my life was "the driving motivation" for the first half, while "high ambitions" took up the second. My nearest and dearest were a shocking liability throughout. One "family member" acted in "erotic unpredictable ways" in February. A "frankly knackered" "social whirl" in early spring was followed by "a more demanding mood" in which everyone had "over-high expectations" of me, the fool. Everyone in my entire life seemed "on edge" in April, but then "joint finances" improved and I threw myself into a "secret romance" which, all too predictably, I'm afraid, made April 20 "sticky."

I was "emotionally topsy-turvy" on May 7 but, bang on cue, "finances" improved again, once they were given my "wholehearted" attention. My "sunny charm" knocked everyone dead in early summer, enabling me to keep my "hidden agenda" up my sleeve, before I legged it to "fly free" to "green pastures." But sadly, by July my life had descended into turmoil once more: an eclipse of the sun warned me that "a cancer push" was "vital," and it was all I could do to stop myself being "distracted" by "emotional muddles." Sadly, my professional clear-sightedness didn't stop another bout of "sticky moments" and I strove unavailingly to "keep my temper steady," "hold to compromises," and "find a middle way between neither pushing too hard nor being pushed around."

My family, not surprisingly, found themselves "on tenterhooks" in August, as I flailed about in this socio-economic maelstrom, and the kindly attention of "close partners" was thwarted as they found, yet again, my "attention diverted to sorting out finances." Honestly, it's like being married to Gordon Brown. As the year drew to a close I narrowly avoided having to "rub up against rather tricky people" and refused to "suffer fools gladly" around my birthday on

October 24, contenting myself with "pulling strings behind the scenes."

I certainly didn't want any "unresolved clunker," as I approached Christmas, and "getting finances into shape," when I'd rather have been out getting sloshed, meant I had to "resist the temptation to fly off the handle." But luckily I found "a gentle way of letting off steam" — possibly at the Priory in Roehampton — and ended the year bravely staring at "the momentous turning-point of the century."

Because, as you will have guessed, the year I've been looking back on with such drained exhaustion is 1999. I've just been reading Marjorie Orr's month-by-month horoscope in *The Express* for my life, right through this year, and by the time I reached the end, I felt like lying down in a cave until it was all over. It's not the "predictions" that bother me — nothing concrete is predicted — it's the prevailing note of frantic emotional activity.

According to the clairvoyant Ms. Orr, I will spend the year on a roller-coaster of emotion, swinging between confusion and impotent fury, endlessly upset, bothed, under-valued and over-provoked by a puzzling spouse and traitorous work colleagues, forever balancing the account books and constantly defending myself against strange, unnameable crises.

I do not know Ms. Orr, but I suspect she is the kind of friend we all need in a crisis — one of ones unflappable conservatism, whose conversation is a succession of emollient platitudes about casting no cloud, taking the rough with the smooth, not throwing out the baby with the bath water. She would never feel, be the one to say, "Oh for God's sake just leave the bastard," or "Of course you should take the job," or

"Just try a little snort of this, you'll like it." For she is one of the nation's leading "sun-star columnists" as hack astrologers are sometimes called, and her function is to reassure — to whisper in her readers' ears that, although their lives are amazingly moveniently, they must try not to be swept away by the stormy emotions and crazy scenes with which their days will be filled.

Astrology is an odd profession, beginning in Babylonian starlight, 4,000 years ago, made up of equal

our imaginations. When the Darwinist Professor Richard Dawkins trashed the whole subject of astrology in *The Independent* on Sunday in 1995, saying that its professional exponents should be jailed for fraud, the resulting correspondence filled acres of newsprint.

At this time of year, it's also a goldmine for newspapers and magazines. When the next 12 months will pitch us straight into a new century and into a whole thousand-year epoch, the whole business takes on a kind

If Mars and Pluto (which rule Scorpio with dynamic and power-crazed ruthlessness, and are the reason girls give Scorpio chaps a wide berth at parties) are both in Sagittarius next September, playing hell with my capacity to make any money, though at least I can be comforted that the Prince of Wales (Scorpio, born November 14) is in the same yacht. This accounts for the secondary phenomenon of early January — a rash of predictions of how the year will pan out for various "celebrities": how Zoo Ball will have a baby and Jerry Hall will win a huge divorce settlement against Mick Jagger (says the *Sunday People*), how

Ann Widdecombe and Peter Mandelson, both Librans, will be transformed from "villains to heroes," and the entire cast of *Friends* (mostly Leos, spookily) will come unstuck, according to Shelley von Strunkel in *The Sunday Times*.

The *Express* and the *Daily Mail* are currently in the midst of a soothsayer battle for readers. The *Mail* offers "Jonathan Cainer's Millennium Countdown" all this week (yesterday Love, today Wealth) and a "Personal Horoscope" special free offer. The *Express* has the sainted Ms Orr's "Your Stars for 1999" running all week, with an eight-page pullout guide in colour. The *Express* offer was flagged, last weekend, by a TV commercial featuring Ms Orr, a grand, duchess-like figure, explaining why she is a good astrologer to a snapish, disembodied telephone voice, presumably *The Express'* abrasive editrix Rosie Boycott.

"Not it wasn't me," said Boycott. It's all fiction. But the reason why we do it is because horoscopes sell papers. At this time of the year we expect to add as many as 80,000 to the sales figures. "At what cost of investment?" It's done on

newsprint, and it's written by the staff astrologist, so it doesn't cost us much — in the region of £12,000."

Did a sophisticated rationalist like herself believe in star signs? "To an extent. I think horoscopes are good if they can nudge you psychologically towards something you've been half-thinking, and crystallise the thought. It's all about language. The good ones write well."

The language issue is not one that springs to mind. Mischa O'Connor in today's *Daily Star* advises, "Borrow an item instead of buying it and you'll save some much-needed cash." Gemini Jane in *The Sun* suggests, "It is a great time to renovate or decorate your home."

Justin Toper in *The Mirror*, a man who fatally resembles a Glitter Band roid circa 1972, goes for more direct and positive approach — yesterday he promised Leos that "something wonderful is about to take place" and Scorpios "You are about to enjoy a whole new way of life." But then Mr. Toper lives on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, and is entitled to a little euphoria.

A more teasing note is struck by Jonathan Cainer in *The Mail*. "Things have to be different in 1999," he announces boldly. "You already know, I'm sure, the things to which I refer. Why, then, does this send shock waves down your spine? Don't you trust the sky to take care of all your emotional needs?"

Then, perhaps fearing he is being over-deterministic, he writes, "Are you worrying about going from frying-pan to fire?" and we're back with the essence of horoscope writing: blandness, holding steady, walking your own path, playing strategic game, finding the middle way. The trick is to make the seething neurotic mass of horoscope readers feel congratulated on their indecision, fêted for their selfishness, praised for allowing forces outside themselves to run their lives. No wonder it's been a potent tool with which to quieten the proletariat for 4,000 years.

— *The Independent*

## Scientists aim to clone elephant super breed

By Thanaporn Promyamayai  
Agence France Presse

THAILAND'S OVERWORKED elephants could be saved from looming extinction if scientists achieve their dream of cloning a new super breed from the remains of a royal jumbo which died 100 years ago.

Researchers here hope to engineer genetically a new strain of elephant to replenish the species' drastically dwindling numbers in Thailand, which proudly displays the beast as a national symbol.

They even hope eventually to extract genetic material from the preserved remains of the white elephant which belonged to Thailand's 19th century King Rama IV, to create a breed strong enough to survive centuries into the future.

"It is our dream to clone an elephant. We want to make that dream come true," veterinarian Chisanu Chiyadonsri, secretary of Wild Animal Rescue of Thailand said.

"Cloning will improve the quality of the elephant breed and maintain a species strong enough to survive," he added.

Thailand's elephants are facing an uncertain future as hundreds of beasts are crippled by overwork and creeping birth rates threatened extinction in the next century.

There are now 2,000 wild elephants in Thailand — a

sharp drop from the 4,600 in 1983.

Some 3,000 domesticated animals stamp through hours of work a day but are dying at a rate of about 200 a year.

Worryingly, only 15 births are registered annually — a trend that must be reversed before the elephant is wiped out entirely.

The potential of cloning became fully clear when scientists in Scotland cloned Dolly the sheep from an udder cell in 1997. It was the first time a mammal had been created from adult cells.

Critics of the technique argue however that Man should not attempt to manipulate nature or to create life for his own benefit.

Chisanu's answer is that if genetic reproduction is not used Thailand's elephants will be remembered only on tourist souvenirs, flags and art.

He plans to conduct a three stage study including reproductive techniques and the hormone cycle. At least 20 million baht (half a million dollars) will be needed to be raised from the private sector for the study which is expected to take 10 years.

"In terms of advancing science it is good but we have advantage cloning can offer us.

"Elephants now are not used for logging anymore, we do not have the forests left for them."

Chisanu said that as existing elephants had not been well treated there was no guarantee future cloned beasts would fare any better.

"If our project succeeds,

we plan to ask the King for permission to use the white elephant.

Chisanu added: "if possible, we scientists hope to clone this elephant since it is the best one ever found in the country."

The remains of the white elephant, so-called because of the purity of its character, are now preserved in alcohol in a set of glass jars in Thailand's Elephant Museum in Bangkok.

The Bangkok Mahidol University project has already been partially successful, as a cow is pregnant with a cloned embryo, reports here said.

But even the prospect of a new super-breed will not ease the anxiety of those who worry about the huge moral issues which surround cloning.

Friends of the Asian Elephant Foundation secretary general Sorida Sudwala argues that cloning might in fact worsen the lot of the Thai elephant.

"I am not against the idea but the reason why we need to do it is not clear to me," she said.

"In terms of advancing science it is good but we have advantage cloning can offer us.

"Elephants now are not used for logging anymore, we do not have the forests left for them."

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"If our project succeeds,

HE WAS supposed to be the Noble Savage who was at one with nature, but new research suggests that wherever early Man went, mass extinction was to follow.

It has always been difficult to explain why so many of the world's largest animals — the "megafauna" — had disappeared so quickly from different regions of the world over the past 100,000 years.

Climate change was considered the reason for the extinction of giant sloths in South America, huge flightless birds in Madagascar, the sabre-toothed cats of North America, and carnivorous kangaroos in Australia.

In a few thousand years Australia lost all 19 species of marsupials over 100kg in size, and 22 out of 38 species between 10 and 100kg. South Amer-

ica fared even worse. It lost 46 of its 58 groups of large animals, including Glyptodonts (armadillos the size of vans), Macrauchenia, a long-necked camel-like animal, and Arctodus, a huge bear, half as big again as the grizzly.

Professor Gifford Miller, a scientist who dates fossils at the University of Colorado at Boulder, believes he has the first firm evidence linking the death of the megafauna with the emergence of Stone Age people at the end of the Pleistocene era — between 100,000 and 10,000 years ago. His team of researchers focused on the dating of pieces of fossilised eggshell left behind by Glyptodonts, a giant flightless bird.

The scientists found that none of the eggshell fragments they analysed were younger than 50,000 years old. This coincides nicely with the date when the first humans arrived on the continent. "I think we have compelling evi-

dence that the Gennomis extinction date is applicable to the majority of Australian megafauna," Professor Miller said.

The scientists believe that with the arrival of the first human colonisers, Australia's landscape underwent a radical change which ultimately killed off the larger animals, from giant horned tomoths as big as VW beetles and wombats the size of rhinos, to a 25-foot-long snake and a one-ton lizard.

The new arrivals are thought to have pioneered a system of land management used until recently by Aboriginal people, who would start bushfires in order to stimulate grass growth and encourage fresh game. "We suspect the systematic burning by the earliest colonisers differed enough from the natural fire cycle that key ecosystems were pushed past a threshold from which they could not recover," Professor Miller said.

Colin Tudge, a research fellow at the Centre for Philosophy at the London School of Economics, said there is now overwhelming evidence to suggest that humans were responsible for the "overkill" at the end of the Pleistocene era.

"Soon after you get humans arriving on a big continent or island, you get animals disappearing," Mr. Tudge said. The only exception is Africa, where humans and big animals co-evolved for 2 million years.

"Unlike the animals of Africa, the creatures of the Americas and Australia were totally unused to human ways," Mr. Tudge said.

"However it happened, it shows that the idea of a 'noble savage' in tune with the animals around him is a lie. The only animals we are in harmony with are the ones that we failed to knock on the head," said Mr. Tudge.

levels of natural prey and interrupted the tiger's breeding cycle.

The range each tiger normally needs is a radius of about 20 kilometres, Teoh said.

Inevitably, tigers find themselves within short distance of humans and livestock.

"It comes out of its habitat to look for food. Most of the time, it goes for easy prey such as cattle and goats," Teoh said, adding that an increase in forest preservation would help protect the remaining tigers.

Using remote cameras in jungle ranges, authorities are trying to count the number of tigers — a census in the wild.

"Once this is done, we can sit down with the villagers and hopefully come up with something," Teoh said.

"We always say the tiger encroaches into human areas. But we are actually the ones who are encroaching on their habitat."

## Tigers feel the pinch in Malaysia

By Benjamin Low  
Reuters

GAZALI ABDULLAH yelled in horror as a 68-kg tiger pounced on his 10-year-old son. Mauled from behind, the boy was screaming in pain.

"I was shouting 'Allahu Akbar!' (God is Greatest) and growling as I waved my hand to initiate a tiger," Gazali, 41, told the Star newspaper as he recalled the December attack in the northern state of Kelantan.

Distraught by the father's shouts, the tiger released bleeding Mohamed Nashardin, who survived with 30 stitches.

The attack, which took place at the edge of

even the country's army have been mobilised to track down the tiger that attacked Nashardin.

Three traps were set without success.

Perhilitan officials said they were confident the tiger would eventually be captured and sent to a zoo.

"But if it's not possible, we'll have to use the last resort. We'll have to shoot it because if you don't do that, it may cause a lot of negative circumstances," Perhilitan's wildlife management unit chief E. Sivananthan told Reuters.

In July, rangers shot dead a tiger that had killed two men and some livestock, outraging conservationists.

Game rangers from Malaysia's Wildlife and National Parks Department, Perhilitan, and

Tigers are highly endangered. Globally, some 5,000 to 7,500 tigers survive in the wild, according to WWF Malaysia.

The Indo-Chinese tiger is the only species in Malaysia. Of the 2,000 Indo-Chinese tigers in the world, about 500 roam the jungles of peninsular Malaysia, Perhilitan estimates.

Historically, the world's largest cat has been revered in Malaysia as a symbol of strength and power. The country's royal crest portrays two tigers on either side of the coat of arms.

Palm oil, quoted in U.S. dollars, has been especially lucrative as its price has risen in line with the ringgit's fall since mid-1997.

The director general of forestry for peninsular Malaysia, Hashim Saad, said last June that about three million hectares (seven million acres) of the country's 19 million hectares of forest would be cleared and eventually converted to housing, industry, agriculture and other uses.

Teoh said land development restricted the

levels of natural prey and interrupted the tiger's breeding cycle.

Burnt experts say increased land clearing in recent years has become a major threat, endangering the tiger's habitat.

"Perhaps with the economic slowdown there is extra pressure on land clearing because the government is encouraging agriculture," Teoh said.

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## Greenspan, international central bankers urge more reforms for Asia

HONG KONG (AFP)

— U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and 16 other international central bankers agreed Monday that Asia was recovering from economic crisis but there should he no let-up in crucial bank reforms.

Greenspan and other influential officials including European Central Bank president Wim Duisenberg and Bank of Japan chief Masaru Hayami met at the Hong Kong office of the Swiss-based Bank for International Settlements (BIS) for a "sharing of experiences," said BIS General Manager Andrew Crockett.

He told a news conference that no concrete measures emerged from the five-and-a-half hours of closed-door talks, which were intended to provide a forum for informal discussion.

"We discussed in the morning and early afternoon the international economic and financial situation," Crockett said. "We discussed for the remainder of the afternoon issues related to strengthening financial systems and bank restructuring."

He said the central bankers agreed the world economic envi-

ronment was "a reasonably positive one" and that Asia was "on the mend" but that efforts to shore up shaky banking systems needed to continue.

Each governor gave an appraisal of his domestic economy with Greenspan telling his counterparts that despite an expected easing of growth in the United States, the slowdown would be "relatively moderate," said the official from BIS, dubbed the central banks' central bank.

Hayami said Japan's economy had "reached the bottom ... and was likely to record positive growth next year," according to Crockett, while Duisenberg was confident of solid growth in the European single currency area.

On Asia "the expectation is that we are now probably past the bottom of the cycle in most countries and the prospects are that there will be some recovery from now."

"There was a broad measure of agreement that it was important to tackle bank restructuring as a matter of urgency to make sure that ... difficulties in the banking system were put behind us so that the banking systems can play their full role in promoting economic

growth," Crockett said.

The governors agreed

banks had to be given a lifeline but recapitalisation had to be done properly so it did give an excuse to postpone much-needed reform, he said.

Representatives from 10 other Asian economies attended the meeting: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand.

They were joined by the central bank chiefs of Argentina, the Czech Republic, Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

People's Bank of China governor Dai Xianglong told the meeting he did not expect the bankruptcy of Guangdong International Trust and Investment Corp. (GITIC) would lead to a credit crunch for Chinese firms, Crockett said.

Dai presented a "comprehensive report on the financial situation" in China and also "discussed the developments in individual financial institutions, including the trust and investment companies."

"Governor Dai did not suggest that ... credit constraint was a problem" with the trust and investment firms in the spotlight as nervous

Dai.

Monday's meeting was the first high-level one to be held at BIS's Hong Kong office since it opened last July to provide a forum for regional banking talks.

Central bank governors from the Group of 10 leading industrialised nations meet monthly at the BIS headquarters in Basel.

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regional banking talks.

The decline in merchandise imports and the slowdown in the pace of export growth was influenced mainly by reduced trade in diamonds and a further fall in (all import) prices," the bureau said.

It said imports of rough diamonds fell 19.7 per cent for the year but did not provide a dollar figure. The bureau said exports of polished and unpolished diamonds dropped 14.7 per cent to \$4.35 billion.

On a quantity basis, Israeli merchandise exports rose more sharply, by 11 per cent in 1998, while imports showed a four per cent rise.

The bureau said trade figures for the last month of 1998 — excluding diamonds, transport items and fuel — showed imports rising at an annual rate of 6.7 per cent since August.

Exports in the final quarter were growing at a 5.6 per cent clip.

Exports of manufactured goods and computer software rose 7.6 per cent in 1998 to \$15.97 billion, slowing from a 10 per cent rise in 1997 and an eight per cent rise in 1996.

The bureau said high technology exports rose between 12 and 26 per cent, depending on the category.

Agricultural exports rose 2.9 per cent to \$825.0 million, slowing from a nine per cent rise in 1997.

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# Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Tuesday, January 12, 1999 9

## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Activity rises at port of Aqaba

**THE VOLUME** of goods handled at the port of Aqaba amounted to 12.6 million tonnes in 1998, three per cent higher than the 12.3 million tonnes handled in 1997. Ports Corporation Director General Mohammad Dalabeh indicated that the volume of imports handled during last year was 5,333,736 tonnes, a 12 per cent rise over the 4,778,310 tonnes handled during 1997.

Dalabeh attributed the increase to handling higher volumes of grains, steel, ammonia and sulphur. Grain imports went up from 1.6 million tonnes in 1997 to two million tonnes in 1998 and steel imports from 363,808 tonnes in 1997 to 449,616

tonnes in 1998. Imports of ammonia and sulphur rose from 614,904 tonnes in 1997 to 878,770 in 1998.

The port chief indicated that there was also an increase in the number of trucks which increased by seven per cent from 219,578 trucks in 1997 to 234,824 trucks in 1998. This lifted the volume of tonnes loaded from 4,499,425 million in 1997 to 5,121,176 tonnes last year, or by 621,751 tonnes that represent an increase of 14 per cent.

Dalabeh concluded that the number of general vessels and cargo ships also rose by one per cent from 1,445 in 1997 to 1,458 in 1998 (Al Ra'i).

### Incoming transfers from expatriates exceed outgoing transfers by seven-fold

**ACCORDING TO** latest official statistics, incoming transfers from Jordanian expatriates are seven-fold the amount of outgoing transfers from foreign labour working in the Kingdom. The statistics showed that the inflow of transfers amounted to JD506.7 million during the first six months of last year. The amount was JD226.8 million during the first quarter and JD239.9 million during the second quarter of 1998. The total inflow of expatriate remittances amounted to JD1.17 billion during the whole of 1997.

During the first six months of last year, foreign labour in Jordan transferred abroad a total of JD72.3 million of which JD36.9 million were remitted during the first quarter and JD35.4

million during the second quarter. A total of JD141.8 million was transferred by "guest workers" in Jordan during the whole of 1997.

The statistics showed that there continues to be a balance between the number of persons arriving and departing the country. During the first ten months of last year a total of 3.95 million arrived in Jordan while the number of those departing was 3.97 million during the same period.

In 1997, 1996 and 1995 the number of arrivals was 4.27 million, 4.27 million and 4.38 million respectively while the number of persons departing was 4.11 million, 4.18 million and 4.34 million respectively (Al Arab Al Yawm).

## BAT, Rothmans International merge

**LONDON (AFP)** — British American Tobacco (BAT) and Rothmans International Monday unveiled plans to create an international tobacco giant with 16 per cent of the global market for cigarettes through a merger dominated by BAT.

The merger of BAT, already the second-biggest manufacturer of tobacco in the world, and Rothmans, the fourth-biggest, will create a company worth 13 billion pounds (18.5 billion euros, \$31.3 billion).

The merged group to be called and controlled by BAT, will account for 16 per cent of all cigarettes sold in the world, just behind the 17 per cent held by market leader Philip Morris.

The deal, which comes as the industry faces costly legal battles in the most developed markets and reduced demand because of the global economic slowdown, aims at increasing sales in developing markets in Asia and Latin America.

"We will be the clear mar-

ket leader in the developing world, where most of the future growth is expected," BAT chairman Martin Broughton said.

The deal aims to bring the BAT brands Lucky Strike, State Express 555, Benson and Hedges, Kent, Players and Pall Mall under the same roof as the Rothmans brands, Dunhill, Rothmans, Peter Stuyvesant and Winfield.

Such a move, the companies said in a statement, would secure annual cost savings of 250 million pounds in three years' time after a one-off payment of 400 million pounds.

Broughton, said in a statement: "This merger represents a major step forward in the achievement of our vision to become the world's leading international tobacco company."

Rothmans is at present a subsidiary of the Swiss Compagnie Financiere Richemont. One third of the company is owned by the Rembrandt Group of South Africa.

Johann Rupert, chief executive of Richemont and chairman of Rembrandt, said: "The long term interests of the Rothmans Group are best served by being part of a larger tobacco business which will have enhanced market positions and greater scale of operations."

A BAT spokesman conceded that the deal came at a difficult time for the international tobacco industry.

"It has both defensive characteristics and indeed more positive ones. If there is a recession around the world, the defensive opportunities for cost saving will still be there but when growth returns we'll benefit from the shift to premium and international brands," he said.

The companies said that "conditions in Asia remain very difficult" but added that the deal would produce greater importance "in the faster growing emerging markets."

Last year, BAT agreed to pay \$430 million to settle Medicaid tobacco litigation

suits in 46 U.S. states. The company said that this charge might rise to \$750 million in total.

The spokesman said that job losses would contribute to the merged group's cost savings.

"Clearly there will sadly be

job losses around the world but it is too early to speculate on exactly where those

are going to be," he said.

The new tobacco giant will be faced with heavyweight

British public figures including former finance minister Kenneth Clarke, who will be the deputy chairman, and Rupen Pennant-Rea, the former deputy governor of the Bank of England, a non-executive director.

Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher joined Rothmans after she was voted out of office as prime minister by the then governing Conservative Party in 1990.

### A.F.M TRADE ACCESS 4646868

Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
<b>BANKS</b>			
JARAB BK	218.000	216.000	-0.92%
INTL BK	1.560	1.560	0.00%
BL OF JD	1.230	1.230	0.00%
THE HOUSING BK	2.800	2.750	-1.76%
JO. KUWAIT BK	1.650	1.640	-0.61%
JO. GULF BK	0.700	0.670	-4.28%
JO. ISLAMIC BK	1.680	1.660	-1.19%
BET ELML	0.670	0.660	-1.49%
PHILADELPHIA BK	0.550	0.550	0.00%
<b>BANKS INDEX</b>			
	282.230	point =	-0.97%
<b>INSURANCE</b>			
JO. FRENCH INS	2.700	2.700	0.00%
ARHLA INS	1.110	1.110	+5.41%
<b>INSURANCE INDEX</b>			
	126.430	point =	+0.27%
<b>SERVICES</b>			
ELECTRIC POWER	1.750	1.700	-2.88%
IRIB ELECTRICITY	1.620	1.560	+2.47%
PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	0.800	0.790	-1.25%
AL-RAY	0.260	0.260	0.00%
COMMODORE	5.400	5.400	0.00%
ARAZA FOR EDU	1.130	1.110	-1.78%
ARAB INT'L FOR INVEST. E	0.980	0.980	+0.52%
JO. INVEST. HOLDING	0.890	0.890	+4.49%
UNIFIED LAND TRANS	1.150	1.150	0.00%
<b>SERVICES INDEX</b>			
	110.850	point =	-0.49%
<b>INDUSTRY</b>			
CEMENT	3.720	3.550	-4.57%
PHOSPHATE	1.680	1.680	-0.59%
JARAB POTASH	3.240	3.220	-0.62%
PETROLEUM	10.550	10.570	+0.19%
THE IND. COMM. & AGRICU	1.090	1.060	-3.75%
WORSTED MILLS	6.720	6.380	-5.06%
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL	2.910	2.830	-2.75%
CERAMIC IND	1.110	1.110	0.00%
TOBACCO & CIGARET	1.220	1.210	-0.82%
RAJAFI	0.530	0.530	0.00%
DAR AL DAWA	5.350	5.150	-3.74%
MIDDLE EAST COMPLEX	0.570	0.550	-3.51%
JO. STEEL	0.980	0.980	-1.01%
ARAB ALUMINUM	1.900	1.850	-2.63%
CHLORINE	1.220	1.220	0.00%
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	0.400	0.390	-2.50%
PETRO - CHEMICAL	0.330	0.320	-3.03%
CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE	0.900	0.900	+5.56%
ROCKWOOD	0.290	0.280	0.00%
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	1.060	1.020	-3.77%
SULPHO - CHEMICALS	0.380	0.380	0.00%
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM	1.240	1.240	0.00%
UNIVERSAL MODERN IND	0.680	0.680	-1.52%
IND. RESOURCES	0.450	0.440	-2.22%
INT'L ALUMINUM	0.700	0.690	-1.43%
<b>INDUSTRY INDEX</b>			
	83.920	point =	-1.99%

### British Post Office buys German Parcel in first big foreign acquisition

**LONDON (AFP)** — The British Post Office said Monday that it has agreed to buy German Parcel, the third largest private carrier in Germany, under a new regime of commercial freedom announced by the government

last month. Post Office chairman John Bain said in a statement: "An acquisition of this kind is a key first step in our strategy of becoming one of the top global distribution companies."

John Roberts, the chief executive, said that the deal was "the first tangible outcome of the commercial freedoms announced for the post office."

In December, the then trade and industry secretary announced greater commercial liberty for the Post Office, which is state-owned and has a monopoly on basic mail, but that full privatisation was "unrealistic."

This major international acquisition shows the commitment of the government and the Post Office to move quickly to implement the radical package of reforms announced last December," said recently appointed Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Stephen Byers.

Its Dead Sea Works subsidiary produces potash and has a joint magnesium venture with Volkswagen AG.

Another subsidiary, Dead Sea Bromine, is the world's largest producer of bromine compounds.

The Eisenberg family currently controls 53.3 per cent of the capital and 56.0 per cent of the voting rights in the Israel Corp, one of the country's biggest holding companies.

Israel Corp's other holdings include, in joint ventures with the government, a 26 per cent stake in Oil Refineries Ltd and a 50 per cent stake in Zim Israel Navigation.

The Post Office is one of the few remaining nationalised businesses in Britain and, along with its counterparts in other European countries, is under pressure to adapt to the growing deregulation of the monopoly system.

The Post Office said its new subsidiary will keep its name and its German management. No jobs are expected to be lost.

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### Israel demands say in any Potash-Israel Corp deal

**TEL AVIV (Reuters)** — The Israeli government has informed Canada's Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan (PCS) that it needs official approval to acquire control of Israel Corp., an industry source said on Monday.

The government made its position known in a letter sent on Sunday to Yehuda Raviv, the Canadian company's attorney in Israel.

Doron Cohen, the head of the Israeli Government Corporations Authority, said in the letter that acquiring control of the Israel Corp would be tantamount to buying control of Israel Chemicals Ltd, in which the state holds a golden share.

Israel Corp's chairman Erwin Eisenberg and PCS said on Sunday the Eisenberg family was in talks to sell its controlling stake in the Israel Corp to PCS.

The Israel Corp controls 52 per cent of Israel Chemicals, which under a recent change in Israel Chemicals' charter gives it effective control over naming the entire board of Israel Chemicals.

Israel Corp's other holdings include, in joint ventures with the government, a 26 per cent stake in Oil Refineries Ltd and a 50 per cent stake in Zim Israel Navigation.

The letter calls attention

to the fact that the purchase of shares in Israel Corp is subject to the rights of the state as the state has a special share," said the source, who asked not to be identified.

Israel Chemicals was founded and until recently controlled by the Israeli government. It has exclusive use of the Israeli mineral resources of the

## Samaranch 'injured' but not bowed, says IOC member

SYDNEY (AP) — International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch has been "injured" by the IOC's corruption crisis but will fight for a resolution, according to a fellow member.

Australian IOC member Phil Coles said Samaranch was "mortified and very hurt" by the results of investigations into Salt Lake City's bid to host the 2002 Winter Games.

But he said the claims against IOC members were not enough reason for Samaranch to step down.

"There have been rumours (of corruption) around for some time, but nothing to ever lay a finger on," Coles told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio Monday.

"While I think he's been injured by this and he's very, very disturbed, he'll fight on. The IOC knew of

rumours, but knew nothing about them."

Coles said he had not heard before of the claim that prostitutes were offered to IOC delegates, as was reported over the weekend.

"You're asking me something that has been alleged, I'd never heard of it before," Coles said. "It was certainly never inferred about that from anyone that I'm in contact with."

Coles suggested that officials in Salt Lake City might be trying to protect themselves by making untrue statements.

"It seems strange to me that these leaks are coming out of Salt Lake City — it seems as though someone is trying to damage the IOC to save their own skin," Coles said.

He said he did not think the 2000 Sydney Olympics would be damaged

by the allegations emerging from Salt Lake City.

"The only problem for Sydney is that the pressure is going to come on us to make sure that we do perform and that Sydney puts on a show which in effect rescues and rehabilitates the Olympic movement," Coles said.

Salt Lake City Games organizing committee member Ken Bullock told ABC radio that Samaranch should resign, describing the bribery scandal as reprehensible.

"He needs to set the example for the world to see that the IOC will clean its own house and follow the same example as (organising committee chief) Frank Joklik did," Bullock said.



Germans Jutta Kleinschmidt and Yvonne Thorner drive through a village during the special leg Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso) - Mopti (Mali) in the ninth stage of the Grenada-Dakar rally (AFP photo)

## China starts mass blood tests for drug cheats

BEIJING (AFP) — China has introduced mass testing for sports drug cheats at its National Winter Games in the northern city of Changchun.

Officials said almost a third of the 646 athletes at the Games, which started Sunday, are to undergo the tests which have been rejected by the Olympics and most other major international sports events as too costly. There is also an ethical debate over their use.

"We will adopt a new method of the blood test against doping offences in the short track speed skating, cross-country and biathlon at the games," Zhu Chengyi, deputy general secretary of the games organising committee, told a press conference on Monday.

"More than 200 athletes will go through the blood tests during the games," Zhu said.

"And 151 samples have been tested prior to the games, which features a total of 646 athletes, with no positive results found."

China's sports authorities have sought to reassure the world that they have clamped down on drug-taking since a series of embarrassing doping scandals in recent years.

Seven top swimmers were among 11 Chinese to fail drug tests at the Asian Games in Hiroshima. Last year one Chinese swimmer was caught trying to import human growth hormones into Australia for the world championships, and, for others, were disqualified during the event.

Jan-Michael Gambill, of Spokane, Washington, swept past Australian Sandon Stolle in the third set to win their clash 7-6 (9-7), 2-6, 6-1, setting up a second round match against Albert Costa of Spain. Costa beat Paul Haarhuis of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-4.

Former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek got an easy passage through to round two. The sixth-seeded Dutchman led Jerome Golmard 6-4, 4-0 when the Frenchman withdrew suffering an ankle injury.

Dominique Van Roost, the women's eighth seed, had an even easier time of her match against Irina Spirlea, leading 6-1 when the Romanian withdrew because of illness.

Amanda Coetzer, of South Africa, overwhelmed Croatian youngster Mirjana Lucic 6-4, 3-6, 6-0 while No. 7 seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland beat Sandrine Testud of France 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

The tournament features eight of the top 16 men and 17 of the leading 20 women.

Among those in action on center court Tuesday are U.S. Open champion Pat Rafter, Anna Kournikova and Steffi Graf.

## SCOR

French

NFL play

Spar

Englis

Chess buff

UNION (AFP) — A 16-year-old boy from India has won the world chess title for the second year running.

Shantanu Bhattacharya,

from Calcutta, India, beat Britain's

Michael Adams,

from London, England, in a

fast-paced game.

Shantanu, who is

16, beat Adams

in a

game that

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Rainer Schuttler of Germany holds the golden trophy after winning the Qatar Tennis Open final against Tim Henman of England in Doha. Schuttler won, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4. (AP photo)

## Qatar Open Schuttler upsets Henman's title bid

**DOHA (AFP)** — German qualifier Rainer Schuttler notched up the first ATP title of his career here Sunday when he defeated top-seed Tim Henman 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 to win the ATP's \$1 million Doha Open.

Schuttler, ranked a modest 111th in the rankings, completed his glory week with a 6-4, 5-7, 6-1 victory. "I can't believe it," said the 22-year-old German after his win.

"When I came here I just hoped I would qualify for the main draw, I got through my opening matches and then just kept on winning," Schuttler said.

Before his triumph against Henman, Schuttler had beaten Ukraine's Andrei Medvedev, Czech Republic's Daniel Vacek, fourth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia and France's former Wimbledon finalist Cedric Pioline.

Henman, who started slowly by dropping his opening set prior to service game and who lost the first set, appeared to be back in control when he snatched a hard-fought second set.

But in the third there was nothing he could do against an opponent who was spraying winners from all angles.

The 24-year-old Henman, who had been hoping to win his fifth career title, paid a warm tribute to Schuttler. "He's had a great week here and played really well. That's obviously a disappointment for me but it has been good preparation before Australia," Henman said.

Henman was runner-up to Jim Courier here twelve months ago.

## SCOREBOARD

### French League Cup

Lyon	0	Montpellier	2
Nancy	1	Beauvais	0
Strasbourg	1	Troyes	4 aet
Lens	1	Marseille	1 aet

(Lens win 6-5 on penalties)

### Italian League

Cagliari	4	AS Roma	3
Empoli	1	AC Milan	1
Inter Milan	6	Venezia	2
Juventus	1	Bari	1
Perugia	1	Udinese	3
Placenza	3	Parma	6
Sampdoria	1	Bologna	1
Vicenza	1	Salernitana	0
Lazio	2	Fiorentina	0

### NFL playoff quarterfinal

American Conference			
New York Jets	34	Jacksonville	24

### Spanish League

Mallorca	2	Real Madrid	1
Valadolid	2	Real Betis	1
Villareal	1	Real Zaragoza	1
D. La Coruna	1	Racing Santander	2
Oviedo	2	Valencia	2
Real Sociedad	4	Salamanca	0
Alaves	1	Espanyol	1
Tenerife	0	Celta Vigo	2
A. Madrid	5	Extremadura	0

### English Premiership

Man. United	4	West Ham	1
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## Chess buff, 10, makes history

**LONDON (AFP)** — A 10-year-old chess player was celebrating a record Monday as the youngest player in the game's history to qualify for a national championship final.

Murugan Thiruchelva, whose parents are from Sri Lanka, qualified for the British championship aged 10 years and one month, breaking the previous best by over a year, according to chess historians.

Five previous boys who qualified aged 11 have included British world title challenger Nigel Short.

Last year Thiruchelva was the youngest player to draw with a grand master and to perform in competition at the level of an international master.

His mother Shanta said she often had to force him to practise but he loved tournaments and the atmosphere of competition.

"I first taught him about chess when he was three. The day after I showed him the board he came back from the nursery and set it up himself," she said.

Thiruchelva spent Christmas playing with his new yo-yo and an electronic game, she went on. "He really is a normal boy who supports Manchester United and likes computer games — he's also good at chess."

## Redskins sold for NFL record \$700 million

**WASHINGTON (AFP)** — American football's Washington Redskins, considered one of the most profitable sports teams in North America, have been sold for more than \$700 million.

The deal, which also includes two-year-old Jack Kent Cooke Stadium, is expected to be completed and announced here Monday, although television and newspaper reports here said terms were agreed upon Sunday.

Only Rupert Murdoch's \$1 billion purchase of the Manchester United football club is larger among global team sports purchases.

The winners in a bidding war with half a dozen rivals were Edward and Howard Milstein, brothers in a hanking family who own the National Hockey League's New York Islanders and suburban businessman Dan Snyder.

Howard Milstein failed in a bid last year to purchase the National Football League's expansion Cleveland Browns, who went for \$530 million.

The Redskins trail only the Dallas Cowboys in NFL profitability, according to financial studies, because they have attracted sellout crowds for decades and have a new stadium to increase revenue streams.

Thousands more are on a waiting list for season tickets to the Redskins, whose loyal fans have shelled off \$100s and revelled in two Super Bowl titles to increase the fortune of former owner Cooke.

Cooke passed away 21 months ago after serving as majority owner for a quarter-century. Trust terms in his will made it difficult for his son John to keep the team in the family, though he did try.

The deal must still be approved by 75 per cent of the NFL's 30 other owners, a formality likely to be completed later this month in Miami when owners gather for the Super Bowl.

The sale to the Milstein group puts into doubt the future of Redskins coach Norv Turner and general manager Charley Casserly after a season in which the team started 0-7. The younger Cooke was set to keep both if he got the club.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Sad start for Grobbelaar

**JOHANNESBURG (AFP)** — Former Liverpool star Bruce Grobbelaar made a losing debut as coach of South African Premier Soccer League club Seven Stars at the weekend. Mid-table Stars from Cape Town fell 2-0 to second-placed Kaizer Chiefs at Johannesburg Stadium in a match dominated by the home team, who lie five points behind leaders Manning Rangers. The 41-year-old South African-born Grobbelaar has signed a five-month contract and succeeds British coach Jeff Butler in charge of Stars, who won promotion to the national championship last season.

### Brazilian coach signs \$600,000 deal

**BEIJING (AFP)** — Former Brazil coach Sebastiao Lazaroni has signed a one-year contract to take charge of Chinese powerhouses Shanghai Shenhua, sources said on Monday. "We can confirm that Mr. Lazaroni signed a one-year contract for \$600,000 just after 2 p.m. (0600 GMT) today in Shanghai," a Shenhua team spokeswoman told AFP by phone. Although the team spokeswoman declined to give the specifics of the contract, earlier reports in the Shanghai media had indicated Lazaroni would demand as much as 1 million dollars a season. Lazaroni, 49, who coached Brazil at the 1990 World Cup finals, spent the last decade coaching teams in Italy, Mexico and Turkey. The previous two coaches of the Shanghai team — ranked number two in the league behind northeastern champs Dalian — had reported salaries of \$100,000 and \$300,000 a year. Lazaroni's arrival in Shanghai in late December last year was hailed by local fans as he brought in two new Portuguese players and introduced new training methods. The Wenhui News reported. Lazaroni had just completed a single season contract with Brazil's Gremio club prior to moving to Shanghai, the report said.

### Ancelotti Juventus' new coach

**TURIN (AFP)** — Carlo Ancelotti is set to replace Marcello Lippi as the coach of Italian champions Juventus next season, the club's honorary president Umberto Agnelli announced on Sunday. Agnelli, whose family own the club, ended months of speculation when he told reporters: "Ancelotti? I think he will be our new coach." Lippi is widely expected to move to Serie A rivals Inter Milan after the current season.

### Round-the-world balloon attempt postponed

**ALICE SPRINGS (AFP)** — Brewing thunderstorms south of here forced a last minute postponement Monday of a joint Australian-U.S. attempt to circle the world in a balloon, organizers said. "The launch for today has been aborted due to instability of wind," said mission director Dan Pedersen, about two hours before the scheduled lift off. "A thunderstorm observed near Ayers Rock has moved to the southeast and the winds are too unstable to predict in the Alice area," he said. Strong winds and rains have dogged preparations since the scheduled launch of the Team ReMax balloon on December 27. A low pressure system is expected over Alice Springs later Monday bringing showers and storms which threw any further attempt into doubt, although organizers say a Tuesday launch remains a possibility.

### Schlessner, Sainct increase Dakar Rally overall leads

**MOPTI, Mali (AFP)** — Leader in the car section Jean-Louis Schlessner and motorcycle pacesetter Richard Sainct both increased their leads in Sunday's 725km ninth stage of the Paris-Dakar rally. France's Schlessner, and co-driver Philippe Monet, finished the stretch from Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso to Mopti in Mali with a time of 3hr 43min 8sec, more than seven minutes ahead of second-placed Kenjiro Shinokawa of Japan and Henri Magne of France. Schlessner and Monet now lead Spain's Miguel Prieto and Dominique Series of France in the overall standings by nine minutes 25 seconds after the day's 295km of special stages. Meanwhile France's Sainct leads compatriot Thierry Magnaldi by six minutes 43 seconds overall in the motorcycling section after finishing fourth in the stage behind South Africa's winner Alfie Cox.

## Jordan's fate should be decided this week

**CHICAGO (AFP)** — Michael Jordan's future plans, retirement or a return to the National Basketball Association, should be known within days so that the Chicago Bulls, and the league, can plan for the new season.

The three-time reigning NBA champions are anxious for Jordan to make his plans known early this week because contract talks with free agents are already under way and the freedom to sign deals is one week away.

The Chicago Tribune has reported Jordan is smoking 10 to 15 cigars a day and is not motivated to continue the weight-training that got him into shape after his retirement ended in 1995.

But Jordan is known to love a challenge.

Winning a shortened-season title and helping the league recover from a labor fight in the eyes of fans are tasks that might be too much even for Jordan.

"He's the only one, in the short term, who can improve the league's image," said Richard Lapchick, director of Northwestern University's Center for the Study of Sport in Society.

Without five-time Most Valuable Player and 10-time scoring champion Jordan, the NBA's task of regaining the love of American sports fans becomes much more difficult.

"Without Michael Jordan, the NBA has a serious problem," said agent Leigh Steinberg.

"It's difficult to imagine one player having more impact over a league. Some polls show him as the most widely recognizable person in the world. He has so much dominance. It's not like someone is a close second."

"As hard as the NBA has tried, they haven't been able to bring along a new generation of Michael Jordans. There's no heir apparent, and at the end of the day, people respond to stars."

The NBA should fear Jordan's retirement as much as rival clubs might fear his return, said University of Chicago economist Allen Sanderson.

"Michael can heal wounds," said Sanderson, a Bulls' season-ticket holder. "Jordan would be a bridge to next season and give the NBA another six months to make amends with fans."

But Lakers executive vice president Jerry West said it's a mistake to look upon Jordan as a savior.

"It's a terrible burden to try and put the entire league on one player's shoulders,"



Michael Jordan

West said. "The league does not revolve around Michael Jordan. I admire Michael more than anyone. But to say this league is going to sink without Michael Jordan is just not the case."

Obviously having him here would be great because he always seems to find a way to make negative things go away."

The NBA should fear Jordan's retirement as much as rival clubs might fear his return, said University of Chicago economist Allen Sanderson.

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West said. "The NBA has a vested interest in having him return because he protects their TV ratings, which ultimately affect their advertising rates," said Los Angeles

sports marketer David Carter.

Others want the chance to finally beat a man who has been nearly invincible in the 1990s.

"Jordan says all roads to success go through Chicago, and I can't wait to drive a tractor through the place," New York Knicks president Dave Checkett said. "So Michael please come back. We want to beat you."

Magic Johnson, forced into retirement by the HIV virus, made abortive comeback bids and warns, "Don't do it, Michael. You're healthy. You still have a couple of good years left in you. I had no idea how hard it would be to live without basketball my first year out."

Jordan, who turns 36 next month, will have the freedom to decide that he wants someone to coach other than Tim Floyd, the choice of top Bulls executives Jerry Reinsdorf and Jerry

Krause.

"We want to talk to Michael first and find out how he feels," Floyd said. "I'm anxious to hear what Michael is going to do just like everybody else."

"If he would feel more comfortable playing for somebody who is a logical choice for Jerry Reinsdorf or Jerry Krause, I would gladly step aside. Hopefully we will be able to sit down and talk about it."

Floyd has only three weeks to prepare for a 50-game season. The Bulls team he spent countless hours watching on videotapes during the labour fight might be totally different than the one which takes the court.

Only Toni Kukoc, Ron Harper, Randy Brown and Keith Booth are signed for the season. Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman are free agents. So is starting center Luc Longley from Australia.

## Vikings crush Cardinals to advance

**MINNEAPOLIS (AFP)** — Randall Cunningham threw three touchdown passes and Minnesota beat Arizona 41-21 here Sunday, moving the Vikings one victory from their first Super Bowl birth since 1977.

Cunningham completed 17 of 27 face each the New York Jets or reigning champion Denver in the Super Bowl at Miami on January 31. The Vikings are 0-4 in Super Bowls, losing in 1970, 1974, 1975 and 1977.

"We believe it's our destiny to win this time," Minnesota receiver Cris Carter said.

Minnesota finished 15-1 in the regular season, something done only twice before, each time by the eventual NFL champion. Atlanta finished 14-2 and ousted San Francisco 20-18 on Saturday.

"This will probably be the best team we have played all year and we have not played our best game yet," Minnesota coach Dennis Green said.

## New government wins Turkish president's approval, crisis ending

ANKARA (AP) — President Suleyman Demirel gave his approval Monday to a new administration led by pro-secular leader Bülent Ecevit, potentially ending Turkey's six-week-old government crisis.

Ecevit's main challenge as premier-designate had been putting together a government that excluded the Islamic-oriented Virtue Party, the largest single bloc in the 550-member parliament.

Turkey's previous coalition government, also pro-secular, collapsed in a corruption scandal in November.

Ecevit's proposed cabinet is formed only of members of his small Democratic Left Party and three independents.

However, the minority government has pledges of support from the centre-right True Path and Motherland parties, meaning it can easily pass a parliamentary vote of confidence set for Sunday.

One concession Ecevit was forced to make was to remove the popular education minister, whose pro-secular education reforms angered Islamic-oriented voters. The concession was demanded by True Path

leader Tansu Ciller, who is apparently targeting religious votes.

The education minister, Hikmet Ulugbay, instead was named deputy premier.

Ecevit, 73, is expected to govern until April 18 parliamentary elections.

He is a staunch supporter of the secular principles of Turkey, an overwhelmingly Islamic country with a strictly secular constitution.

The military, which has staged three coups in the last four decades, pressured an Islamic-led government out of power two years ago.

The generals remain vigilant against the rise of Islamic movement, warning against any move toward political power in three statements last week.

Negotiations with the International Monetary Fund were expected to start soon.

Ecevit's government is the sixth since the last elections held in 1995.

Ecevit tried for three weeks to form a government when he was first designated in early December, but failed to rally enough support in parliament.

He supports a hard-line foreign policy in relations with the European Union and with regard to the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, which is divided between two heavily armed Greek- and Turkish-allied blocs.

Ecevit was instrumental in negotiations with the European Union and with regard to the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, which is divided between two heavily armed Greek- and Turkish-allied blocs.

Ecevit was instrumental in

getting Turkey to suspend relations with EU last year after the 15-nation group refused to include it on a list of candidates eligible to join.

He also advocates reviewing a customs union agreement with the EU, claiming it works to Turkey's disadvantage.

Ecevit renamed Ismail Cem as foreign minister. No changes were expected in Turkey's foreign policy.

The new government will be busy with Turkey's pressing economic troubles, including high unemployment and inflation.

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## Ten Palestinians arrested in connection with shooting Israeli army lifts Hebron blockade

HEBRON (AFP) — Ten Palestinians have been arrested in connection with last week's shooting attack here that wounded two Jewish settlers. Palestinian security officials said Monday.

Palestinian police arrested eight men in raids in the centre of Hebron over the past two days while Israeli troops apprehended another two in areas of the city which fall under their control, the officials said.

Most of the detainees are believed to be members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad, they said.

As the arrests were made

public, some 150 members of the Israeli right-wing Women in Green movement marched amid heavy security from the nearby Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba to the centre of the old city of Hebron, witnesses said.

The women, protesting what they called a lack of sufficient protection for the 400 Jewish settlers living in Hebron's centre, carried Israeli flags and waved banners reading "Jewish blood is not cheap."

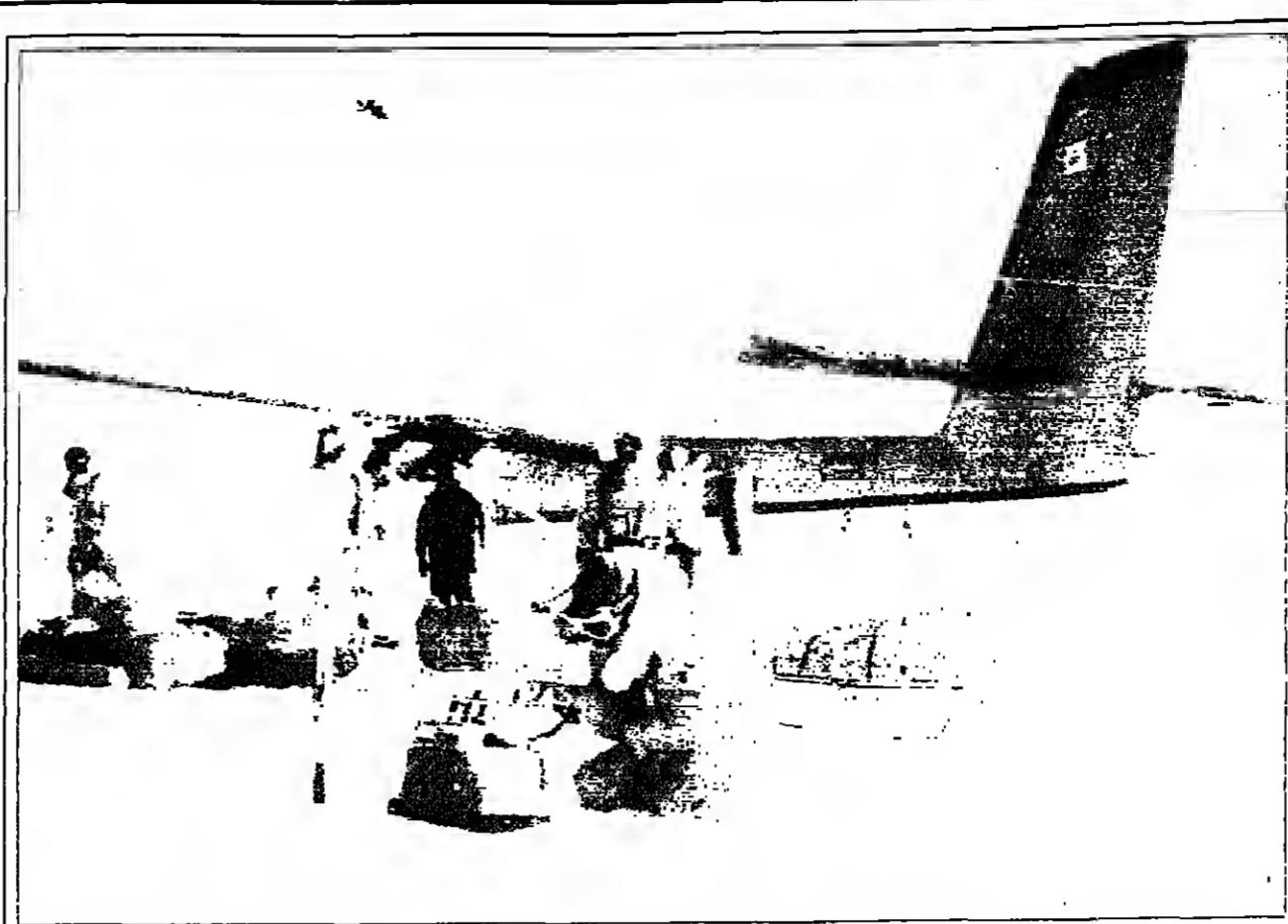
Witnesses said one group of women carried a cartoon of a skeleton modelled on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

There were no reports of any violence during the march, which came after the Israeli army lifted a blockade and partial curfew imposed on this divided city a week ago following the shooting of the settler women.

The blockade prevented 140,000 Palestinians from entering or leaving Hebron, while the curfew affected 20,000 people living in the Israeli-controlled part of the city.

The measures were imposed after gunmen shot and wounded two settler women, sparking fierce clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops.

Israel has said it was ready to pull out of Lebanon, provided the Lebanese government agreed to negotiate



FRENCH TEAM REACHES SOUTH POLE: Recent photo in Antarctica of five members of an elite French army ski team who reached the South Pole Jan. 9 after skiing for 1,350 kms from Gould Bay (AFP photo)

## Japan presents proposal for Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon Syria willing to talk to Israel — Japanese FM

TEL AVIV (AP) — Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura on Monday presented a four-point plan for an Israeli troop withdrawal from Lebanon and his Israeli counterpart, Ariel Sharon, hailed the ideas as "impressive."

Komura also showed the proposal to senior government officials in Syria and Lebanon who, according to Komura's aide, Masaki Okada, were willing to consider it, but had reservations.

The plan appears to be the most ambitious effort yet by Japan to become more actively involved in Mideast peacemaking. Japan's role until now has been largely confined to giving aid to various projects linked to the peace process.

Under the plan, Israel would agree to withdraw its troops unilaterally from southern Lebanon, but the two sides would "discuss the concrete steps" of the pullback.

Israel has said it was ready

to pull out of Lebanon, provided the Lebanese government agreed to negotiate

security arrangements to protect northern Israel from future guerrilla attacks. Lebanon has refused to hold talks, saying Israel was required under U.N. Security Council Resolution 425 to pull out unconditionally.

Sharon supports a staged unilateral withdrawal from Lebanon, but Israel's security cabinet recently rejected that proposal.

The foreign ministers also discussed Iran's development and purchases of long-range missiles.

The Iranians have assured Japan in meetings of top officials that they "won't" disturb the progress of the Middle East peace process and doesn't support terrorism," Okada said.

Komura, meanwhile, said Syria has not lost interest in peace negotiations with Israel which broke off in 1996.

"I am afraid I can't say that the situation is optimistic," Komura said, speaking through a translator.

"However, I urged the Syrians strongly to renew these negotiations, and President Assad showed a certain amount of understanding for this," the minister said ahead of a meeting

with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In Damascus on Saturday, Okada said the negotiations were deadlocked because of the policies of Israel's current government.

Reports have said that at the time talks were suspended, Netanyahu's dovish predecessors agreed in principle to return all of the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast war, in exchange for appropriate security arrangements.

The Syrians have demanded that the Netanyahu government recognise the understandings that were reached with the previous Israeli government, but Netanyahu has refused. Netanyahu opposes far-reaching territorial concessions to Syria.

Israel is Komura's last stop on a week-long Middle East tour that included Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinian areas. He also met with Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and opposition Labour Party leader Ehud Barak, who is running against Netanyahu in the May 17 elections.

## Yemeni mediators ready to pay ransom to free Briton

SANA'A (AFP) — Mediators negotiating the release of a kidnapped British oil worker are prepared to pay a ransom, tribal leaders said Monday as news emerged that two Americans had narrowly escaped abduction in Yemen.

The mediators are determined to get him freed even if they have to pay, one of the tribal chiefs involved in the negotiations told AFP.

A spokesperson for the British embassy in Sana'a would say only that negotiations were continuing and "very close contact" was being maintained with the authorities.

John Brooke, who works for U.S. oil firm Halliburton, was captured Saturday by armed men from the Al Juayd tribe in eastern Yemen where his company is engaged in exploration work.

Brooke, from Norwich in eastern England but who has been working in Yemen for 12 years, was captured in the mountains near Marib, 180 kilometres northeast of the capital Sana'a.

Police say the tribesmen have demanded the release from jail of one of their men who is facing a murder and theft charge.

A Yemeni newspaper said Kadi Ben Aujain is accused, among a list of 17 crimes of killing a sheikh of the Bani Al Hareth, a rival tribe.

The mediation team of three Al Juayd chiefs and two

other respected figures from the Marib region, began work on Sunday night and had made unspecified propositions. The kidnappers had so far not replied, tribal leaders said.

Official sources in Sana'a said security services had deployed in the area in an effort to put pressure on the kidnappers, but that they would not use force.

In London, the Foreign Office said Sunday that Brooke was in good shape despite his ordeal. The British embassy in Sana'a on Monday added: "We haven't heard anything to suggest things have changed."

Ambassador Victor Henderson spoke with Yemen's Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani on Sunday, but the embassy refused comment on the substance of their talks.

Diplomatic sources said the embassy was also trying to arrange a meeting with President Ali Abdallah Saleh.

Brooke's abduction came less than two weeks after 16 western tourists were kidnapped by Islamic militants in southern Yemen.

A rescue attempt by security forces turned into a bloodbath which left four of the hostages, three Britons and an Australian, dead.

There was no indication that Islamic militants were involved in the latest kidnapping.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has advised President Bill Clinton to deny clemency to Jonathan Pollard, a former U.S. Navy analyst in prison for life for providing secret documents to Israel, a senior U.S. official said Monday.

Albright's stance on the Pollard case implies she sees no shock to U.S.-relations with Israel if Pollard remains imprisoned.

Last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee's two top members, con-

cerned Clinton may grant clemency to Pollard, urged other senators to join them in a letter to the president asking him not to do so.

Sen. Richard Shelby, the committee chairman, said he had encouraged Clinton to "rethink what I understand may be his expected course of action."

He was backed by virtually all members of the committee.

Pollard was convicted as a spy for handing over thousands of top-secret documents to Israel in 1984 and 1985.

Clinton confirmed last month that he promised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at U.S.-sponsored negotiations with the Palestinians in October that he would look into Netanyahu's request for leniency for Pollard.

White House counsel Charles Ruff was directed to solicit views of U.S. intelligence and security agencies.

Several former U.S. intelligence officials hotly opposed clemency and asserted that Pollard attempted to provide classified information to other

countries before striking a deal with Israel.

The Justice Department's criminal division adamantly opposes clemency, senior officials said Thursday, requesting anonymity.

Attorney General Janet Reno said she would send Ruff a recommendation by Monday.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Kenneth Bacon noted: "The Pentagon has been strongly opposed to the release of Jonathan Pollard in the past, and I don't expect any change from that position."

## Lebanon fears 'election campaign' from Israeli military

By Jacques Lhuillery  
Agence France Presse

BEIRUT — A recent escalation of Israeli-Hizbollah violence has raised fears that embattled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could use southern Lebanon to try to boost his stature before national elections in May.

Netanyahu is "killing innocent people, women and children for the sake of his electoral campaign," said former Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez.

Now the tables have turned and many fear a weakened Netanyahu — who after the collapse of his ruling coalition was forced to call for May elections — will unleash a tough military campaign on Lebanon.

Hizbollah also twice launched rockets into northern Israel, wounding 16 civilians.

It did not take long for Netanyahu to implement his threat to strike Lebanon's infrastructure in response to guerrilla attacks on Israeli targets in the zone and northern Israel, it said.

Israeli bombardments over the weekend damaged electricity and water installations in southern Lebanon.

"Lebanon is the cemetery of Israeli governments," said Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah which spearheads the guerrilla war to force Israel out of southern Israel, it said.

Violence has mounted in the region since the Dec. 22 Israeli air raid that killed a mother and her six children in the Bekaa valley in eastern Lebanon, triggering a cycle of daily attacks and counter-attacks.

Several Lebanese MPs have called on the Beirut government to launch an international campaign to alert public opinion about the Israeli threats.

Lebanese President Emile Lahoud and Prime Minister Salim Hoss also have reiterated the need to further consolidate ties with Syria, which is the main powerbroker in Lebanon.

Israeli bombardments over the weekend damaged electricity and water installations in southern Lebanon.

With the escalation of the violence has come an increased debate in Israel about the wisdom of its occupation of southern Lebanon. Twenty-four Israeli soldiers were killed there last year and 39 the year before.

But as one Western diplomat put it, both the Hizbollah and Israel remain headstrong, leaving little hope for either side to escape the Lebanese quagmire.

## Albright advises against clemency for Pollard

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has advised President Bill Clinton to deny clemency to Jonathan Pollard, a former U.S. Navy analyst in prison for life for providing secret documents to Israel, a senior U.S. official said Monday.

Albright's stance on the Pollard case implies she sees no shock to U.S.-relations with Israel if Pollard remains imprisoned.

Last week, the Senate Intelligence Committee's two top members, con-

cerned Clinton may grant clemency to Pollard, urged other senators to join them in a letter to the president asking him not to do so.

Sen. Richard Shelby, the committee chairman, said he had encouraged Clinton to "rethink what I understand may be his expected course of action."

He was backed by virtually all members of the committee.

Pollard was convicted as a spy for handing over thousands of top-secret documents to Israel in 1984 and 1985.

Clinton confirmed last month that he promised Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at U.S.-sponsored negotiations with the Palestinians in October that he would look into Netanyahu's request for leniency for Pollard.

White House counsel Charles Ruff was directed to solicit views of U.S. intelligence and security agencies.

Several former U.S. intelligence officials hotly opposed clemency and asserted that Pollard attempted to provide classified information to other

countries before striking a deal with Israel.

The Justice Department's criminal division adamantly opposes clemency, senior officials said Thursday, requesting anonymity.

Attorney General Janet Reno said she would send Ruff a recommendation by Monday.

At the Pentagon, spokesman Kenneth Bacon noted: "The Pentagon has been strongly opposed to the release of Jonathan Pollard in the past, and I don't expect any change from that position."

## Lebanon fears 'election campaign' from Israeli military

By Jacques Lhuillery  
Agence France Presse

BEIRUT — A recent escalation of Israeli-Hizbollah violence has raised fears that embattled Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could use southern Lebanon to try to boost his stature before national elections in May.

Netanyahu is "killing innocent people, women and children for the sake of his electoral campaign," said former Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez.

Now the tables have turned and many fear a weakened Netanyahu — who after the collapse of his ruling coalition was forced to call for May elections — will unleash a tough military campaign on Lebanon.